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LIBERAL INTELLIGENCE

AUGUST 2004

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THRUPKAEW: THE SAUDI "CHARITIES" INSIDE CAMBODIA



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THE RULES OURSELVES?”

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# THE AMERICAN PROSPECT



"[Clinton] used the book to explain his career as he actually saw it, with all the sentimentality, anger, affection, frustration, pride, and at times relentless self-examination that make up his elusive character." PAGE 67

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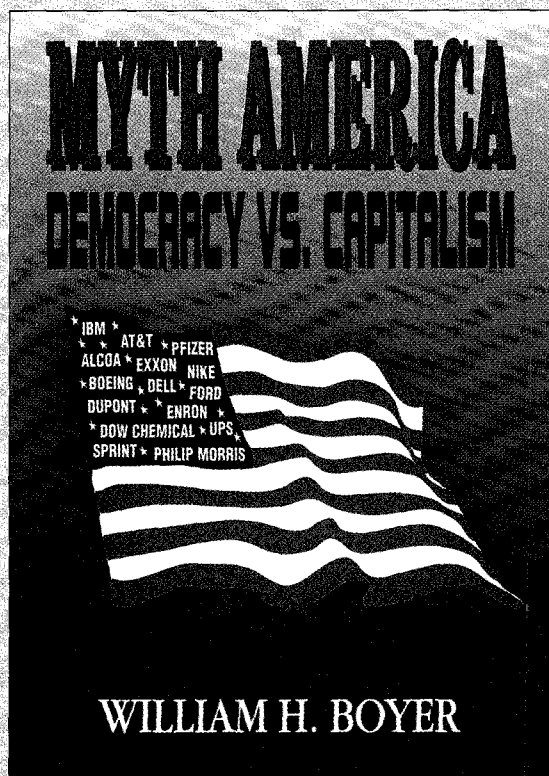
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# America Reinvents

Think back to last summer. George W. Bush's approval ratings stood near 60 percent. Iraq, a "mission" the president had famously declared "accomplished" aboard the *USS Abraham Lincoln* that May, was no paradise, but it was also not yet the political

disaster it later became.

Democratic candidates, portrayed by the media as knock-kneed Barney Fifes, drawing straws to determine which one would face the unhappy chore of heading out into the noonday sun to duel the great gunslinger, scampered across America, brandishing credentials and smiles to audiences that, in the summer of 2003, were neither particularly large nor hopeful. One of those candidates, a senator from Massachusetts, seemed so distant a contender that the obligatory paragraph devoted to him in a round-up story invariably went something like this one, from *The New York Times*: "Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts had a second difficult night at a televised Democratic forum. As had occurred at a debate in South Carolina in May, he struggled with a hoarse, scratchy voice, a distraction from what his aides had hoped would be a commanding performance."

What a difference a year makes.

The campaign-related articles and essays in this special issue of *The American Prospect* reflect the changes of the past year. The optimism now prevalent in progressive circles stems not only—or even chiefly—from President Bush's recent bad fortune. After all, such is the ineluctable power of the office that some of his bad fortune is also the world's, and we don't wish that; a paradoxical and hollow optimism that would be.

Rather, it stems also from a growing sense that Americans are worked up, and that they're worked up in defense of some old values—honest government, policy making based on fact rather than ideological assertion, a public sector that is the private sector's counterweight rather than its handmaiden—that had seemed for a time to have fallen out of favor. This issue of the *Prospect* is about the possibility of a new progressivism, and the movements that sustain it (see Garance Franke-Ruta's piece on the new generation of African American leadership, and Tara McKelvey's on the endlessly inventive group MoveOn.org). It roots around in the past for clues about how we got where we are: The acclaimed novelist Francisco Goldman shows us, through the eyes of José

Martí, the uncanny relevance to today of the whisker-close election of 1884; and Richard Byrne delivers a provocative rethinking and defense of Lyndon Baines Johnson, arguing that the low esteem in which he's currently held by liberals says far more about the ways in which contemporary liberalism misuses its history than it does about Johnson himself.

And the future: Thomas Oliphant, the journalist who's known Kerry longer and better than any other in America—indeed, who was at Kerry's side as the veteran delivered his famous anti-war testimony before the Senate Foreign

Relations Committee in 1971—explains as only he could how Kerry got to this point, and what we can expect of him in the event he is elected. Are we presumptuous to wonder, as Harold Meyerson, Clay Risen, and Laura Secor do, how a President Kerry would, respectively, deal with Congress, use executive power, and fight the war on terrorism? We think not. And we have asked a group of distinguished thinkers and advocates—including John Podesta, Sean Wilentz, Deborah Tannen, Zbigniew

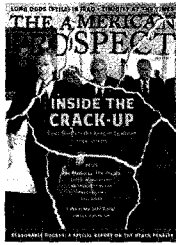
Brzezinski, James MacGregor Burns, Jan Schakowsky, and Christopher Edley—how they would advise a President Kerry to reinvigorate progressive values in the public sphere. The speculation constitutes neither prediction nor endorsement; rather, it reflects a growing sense that America might be ready again, after four years during which day was called night and anyone who objected to the redesignation was dismissed as frivolous (or worse), for actual ideas, agendas, and—most of all—evidence.

Strange things have happened to this country these last four years. A great national tragedy, one that affected us all and took no note of matters like party identification, was first appropriated for partisan ends here at home, and later used as justification for an act of aggression whose logic led to a scandal, Abu Ghraib, that has brought our nation unqualified disgrace. But America always rethinks, reinvents, renews. This issue is about rethinking, reinvention, and renewal. In other words, it's about the America that has been—and can be.

—MICHAEL TOMASKY

**A year ago, Bush  
and his movement  
seemed invincible.  
What a difference  
a year makes.**





*"AARP spokesmen have been wringing their hands over the fate of the 'poor seniors' who should be allowed to buy their drugs from Canada. What a bunch of hypocrites!"*

—SANDI CAMPBELL, Asheboro, NC

## Correspondence

### Tar-Heel Tolerance

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR Hugo Adam Bedau's argument that public support for capital punishment is dwindling ["Death's Dwindling Dominion," July 2004] comes from a new poll in North Carolina that Doble Research Associates has recently published. When given a choice between sentencing murderers to death or to life in prison without parole, plus a requirement that they work and make restitution to a fund for victims' families, support for capital punishment drops dramatically. When people have this option, only 26 percent support the death penalty; 64 percent favor life in prison plus restitution. Without that option, 59 percent of the people of North Carolina favor the death penalty.

Further, by a margin of 63 percent to 28 percent, North Carolinians favor a temporary, two-year suspension on executing people on death row while the system's fairness is studied. Support for a suspension extends to all corners of the state, and includes men and women, Republicans and Democrats, blacks and whites, and adults of every age and education level.

JOHN DOBLE  
President, Doble Research  
Associates Inc.  
Englewood Cliffs, NJ

### The Christians: Right

I FIND MYSELF FITTING Robert Reich's description of a fundamentalist Christian ["Bush's God," June]. Reich states that people who are devout in their allegiance to a higher authority, and who believe that that higher authority requires allegiance from all humans, are a greater "danger" than terrorists. He succeeded in getting my attention.

It is nothing new for humanists and the religious to be at odds. But never before have I read an argument calling devout Christians more dangerous than terrorists. Our society will be better, in part, because of those who believe they owe their allegiance to a higher authority, just as it will be better, in part, because of those who believe in the primacy of the individual.

Terrorism may be a "tactic," but it is, and will be, far more dangerous to than the "battle" Reich describes.

W.C. WOOD  
Albany, NY

AS AN EVANGELICAL Christian, I find myself on what Robert Reich calls the "anti-modernist" side of contemporary conflicts. I suspect most of the moderate to liberal evangelicals recently profiled in your magazine by Ayelish McGarvey ["Reaching to the

Choir," April] would find themselves on the anti-modernist side as well. This surprises and troubles me, as I consider myself not only a modernist but also a strong Democrat, a defender of the separation of church and state, and a long admirer of Reich's writings.

As a Christian, I accept the Bible as the authoritative word of God and believe that there is such a thing as absolute truth. At the same time, I recognize that these views are not held universally. Many people reject religion altogether, while those who believe in God disagree among themselves as to which religion is the true faith. I join with the secular liberals in believing such differences must be settled, if at all, through discussion and persuasion rather than through coercion.

The real conflict is not between secular modernists and religious anti-modernists. Those who would impose onto others their vision of truth—whether secular or religious—pose the real threat.

MICHAEL HAYES  
Professor of Political  
Science, Colgate University  
Hamilton, NY

### Still AARPing

WILLIAM NOVELLI'S response ["AARP Elbows," July] to Barbara T. Dreyfuss'

article "The Seduction" [June] is interesting in light of AARP's support of the Medicare prescription-drug bill, which included the ban on Medicare's ability to use AARP's numbers as clout to negotiate lower drug prices. I noticed in the past week that AARP spokesmen have been wringing their hands over the fate of the "poor seniors" who should be allowed to buy their drugs from Canada. What a bunch of hypocrites!

AARP's No. 1 goal has been to make a profit from its insurance business and its own prescription-drug cards. If it truly supported what is best for seniors, it would have fought tooth and nail to include language in the bill allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices with drug companies. All it has accomplished with this boondoggle of a bill is to allow drug companies to continue to ratchet up prices while offering confusing and inefficient Band-Aids to seniors and calling it "prescription cost relief."

SANDI CAMPBELL  
Asheboro, NC

### Should've Read It

IN HER ARTICLE "SILENCE of the Flock" [June], Mary Gordon inaccurately accuses Catholic liberals of not speaking out about the alleged anti-Semitism of



Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*. Perversely, Gordon cites an article by John Coleman in *Commonweal*, "Mel Gibson Meets Marc Chagall: How Christians & Jews Approach the Cross" (Feb. 27), as being "most offensive to me by a long chalk."

Readers of *The American Prospect* would never suspect that Coleman's essay cautioned that "because of the way the cross has been misused, it is a problematic icon ... it has too often served as an abetment for those who accuse Jews of being Christ killers." Coleman continued: "After the Holocaust, the cross can only be a deep personal confession. It can never presume to speak for any other victim, or to impose its symbolic power on an unwilling other."

Nor would readers of *The American Prospect* suspect that our editorial in the same issue stated, "It is hardly surprising that Jews are made uncomfortable by, even deeply suspicious of, a movie whose dramatic logic and energy focus on the extreme violence of Jesus' death. Historically, who has been blamed for that death?" Gordon makes no mention of Rabbi Irving Greenberg's article "Anti-Semitism in 'The Passion,'" which appeared in our May 7 issue, criticizing official Church "silence" about the film's portrayal of Jews.

For the record, *Commonweal* first began expressing concern about anti-Semitism in Gibson's film in our March 28, 2003, issue, a full year before the film's release.

If Mary Gordon is going to criticize *Commonweal*, she should read it.

PAUL BAUMANN  
Editor, *Commonweal*

*Mary Gordon responds:*  
Perhaps Mr. Baumann has failed to read carefully the Coleman article on *The Passion of the Christ*, which includes the words, near the beginning, "I judged the version I saw free from explicit anti-Semitism." Whatever follows in the article must be read in this context.

*Clarification:*  
In "The Wrong Target" by Jason Vest from our April issue, the author described certain material as being from "a soon-to-be-published memoir" by Mahdi Obeidi, one of Saddam Hussein's leading scientists. In fact, that material was drawn from an agent's proposal for the memoir circulated to publishers that Vest obtained; the material may or may not be included in the published book.

Letters to the editors should be sent to [letters@prospect.org](mailto:letters@prospect.org) or mailed to The Editors, The American Prospect, 2000 L St., NW, Suite 717, Washington, D.C. 20036

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# Devil in the



Family Values: Elizabeth and John Edwards, 1977

## John Edwards Pop Quiz

**1. John Edwards' father worked:**

- a) in a paper mill
- b) in a textile mill
- c) for General Mills
- d) as a research assistant to C. Wright Mills

**2. In 1997, Edwards won a \$25 million verdict for a girl injured by:**

- a) a NASCAR driver
- b) a faulty swimming-pool drain
- c) a super-sized burger

**3. *Four Trials* is:**

- a) the attorneys' version of the Passover Seder
- b) a 1981 Lina Wertmuller movie
- c) John Edwards' biography about his legal career
- d) the in-development story of Martha Stewart and her investment adviser, Peter Bacanovic

**4. Edwards was born in:**

- a) Seneca, South Carolina
- b) Robbins, North Carolina
- c) Nashville, Tennessee
- d) Raleigh, North Carolina

**5. How old is Edwards?**

- a) 51
- b) 41
- c) 31
- d) 21

**6. What sport(s) did Edwards letter in during high school?**

- a) football

- b) football and track
- c) football, basketball, track, and tennis
- d) curling

**7. Who is John Wagner?**

- a) Robert Wagner's younger brother
- b) the (Raleigh) *News & Observer* reporter who trailed Edwards during the primaries and now works as a *Washington Post* state political reporter
- c) the five-time groom and senator from Virginia
- d) a comic-book artist notorious for drawing the character of a homicidal Ecstasy user in the *Batman* series

**8. Edwards was the first person in his family to go to college, where he studied:**

- a) television sportscasting—go Wolfpack!
- b) English literature—reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* inspired him to study the law
- c) textile management—in case that whole law thing didn't work out
- d) politics—of course

**BONUS ROUND!**

**9. What college did Edwards attend?**

- a) Clemson University
- b) North Carolina State University
- c) Duke University
- d) Robbins Community College

**10. Edwards was one of**



# Details

*"It does not affect your daily life very much  
if your neighbor marries a box turtle.  
But that doesn't mean it is right."*

—SENATOR JOHN CORNYN explaining his support for  
a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage

## the first trial lawyers in Raleigh to use:

- a) the forgotten North Carolina legal precedent laid out in *Kuyendall v. Tri-State Lumber Co.*
- b) hair gel
- c) focus groups
- d) writs of mandamus

## 11. In late 1999, Edwards threatened to hold up Senate proceedings until he secured:

- a) \$250 million in disaster aid for his state after Hurricane Floyd
- b) \$13 million to modernize Cameron Indoor Stadium, basketball home of the Duke Blue Devils
- c) a tennis date with Evan Bayh
- d) a pledge from Trent Lott to lift the hold on Edwards' amendment placing terra-cotta tiles under WTO protection

## 12. How old was Edwards at the time John Kerry said his veep pick-to-be was "still in diapers"?

- a) 2
- b) 6
- c) 11
- d) 16

## 13. One of the following did not get a detail-oriented policy treatment

**Answer Key:** 1.b, 2.b, 3.c, 4.a, 5.a, 6.c, 7.b and d (same name; two different men) 8.c, 9.a and b (he had to drop out of Clemson for financial reasons and then finished up at North Carolina State) 10.c, 11.a, 12.d, 13.c, 14.d, 15.c, 16.d (at least)

## from the Edwards campaign during the 2004 primary. It was:

- a) the dire need of rural Latinos for telemedical translating services
- b) the problem of runoff waste emitted by gigantic, corporate hog farms
- c) the fight over clashing window-trim colors in historic Charleston
- d) false postmark dates on credit-card payments

## 14. John Edwards is:

- a) "floppy-haired"
- b) "chocolate-haired"
- c) "thick-haired"
- d) all of the above, according to news reports

## 15. As with most Democrats, health care is a top priority for Edwards. He's proposed spending \$30 million to increase awareness of:

- a) chicken pox
- b) malaria
- c) periodontal disease
- d) Dorian Gray syndrome

## 16. Edwards inspires in John Kerry feelings of:

- a) collegial affection
- b) fraternal affection
- c) maternal affection
- d) confidence about November

—GARANCE FRANKE-RUTA

## After Kerry, The Deluge

MASSACHUSETTS DEMOCRATS sure would love for one of their own to move into the White House next January—but they don't want to lose a seat in the closely divided U.S. Senate

to a Republican for the first time in a quarter-century as a result. That may well happen, however, if Kerry is elected president this November.

Back in early March, when it became clear that Kerry would win the Democratic nomination,

## VAST RIGHT-WING CONSPIRACY

Looking for some summer fun for the whole family? Why not join a new class-action lawsuit urging the Boston Roman Catholic Archdiocese to excommunicate one John Kerry for the crime of heresy?



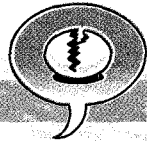
Oh, stop protesting your inadequacies! It's been centuries since you really threw yourself into a heresy trial? Stake burnings give you a certain *je ne sais quoi*? It's the 21st century, and you have no idea how user-friendly such proceedings have become.

Thanks to Marc Balestrieri, a 33-year-old canon lawyer who practices in Los Angeles, you can help excommunicate the presumptive Democratic nominee with just a few keystrokes on Balestrieri's Web site. Balestrieri, who told TAP that his day job usually involves opposing annulments (on behalf of Church doctrine, in diocesan proceedings), has charged Kerry with heresy for continuing to receive communion despite Kerry's well-known support for a woman's right to choose. TAP pointed out to Balestrieri that such Republican Catholics as Tom Ridge, George Pataki, and Rudy Giuliani share Kerry's position and also continue to receive communion (TAP supports bigger bonfires), but Balestrieri denied any political motivation and insisted he'd singled out Kerry as "the most visible and the most egregious" of active Catholics with abortion-rights politics.

In fact, Balestrieri does seem primarily bent on stiffening the Church's spine. "The hierarchy has not sufficiently enforced the disciplinary canons of the code," he laments (a perception that being on the losing side of annulment proceedings can only re-enforce). His lawsuit, he readily acknowledges, is quite without precedent in the United States, even if, on another continent and in another time, heresy trials were once routine.

And besides, he adds, "Most people who were burned at the stake were asphyxiated. They didn't feel the flames."

—Harold Meyerson



## BRAVE NEW WORDS

**JUDICIAL EMERGENCY** The state of affairs caused by Senate Democrats' holding up three Bush judicial appointments. Meanwhile, 26 nominations are pending on the Senate floor, with nothing standing between the nominees and the bench but poor Republican scheduling.

**MORAL, LEGAL, AND ETHICAL** Description by Tom DeLay's spokesman of the House majority leader's corporate fund raising in Texas state legislative elections, which included mega-gifts from Enron, among others. Under Texas law, corporate giving to legislative races has been banned for nearly 100 years.

**DISRUPT THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS** Tom Ridge's description of what terrorists would seek to do with a pre-election attack. Not to be confused with Tom Ridge's solution for same, which is to call off the election until the administration deems it safe to proceed.

state Representative William Straus and state Senator Brian Joyce, Democrats both, filed legislation that would strip Republican Governor Mitt Romney of his power to fill the Senate seat Kerry would vacate if victorious in November. The new legislation called for a special election to be held within a few months of a Kerry victory.

Romney and Republicans complained that the bill would destabilize the constitutional balance (and Lord knows what else). Democrats blamed Republicans for attempting to stifle the will of the people; more than two-thirds of Massachusetts residents polled by the *Boston Herald* said they'd rather pick a new senator than have the governor appoint one on their behalf. Republicans accused Democrats of exploiting their majority status to smother Massachusetts' already asthmatic GOP.

The bill passed in early July, but instead of vetoing it (Democrats would have been able to override his veto anyway), Romney sent it back to the Legislature

with a compromise amendment: Massachusetts would hold a special election soon after the seat becomes vacant, but Romney would be able to appoint a senator during the interim period. Romney's compromise would give the "incumbent" Republican a leg up against his much more well-known, and better-financed, Democratic challengers. The odds are that the Legislature will reject Romney's gambit.

Now that a special election is almost certain—if, of course, Kerry wins—candidates on both sides of the aisle are champing at the bit. Should Romney's amendment pass, his possible appointments include former Governor William Weld, Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey, Massachusetts Convention Center Authority Chairwoman Gloria Larson, John Hancock Financial Services general counsel Wayne Budd, and White House Chief of Staff Andy Card.

On the Democratic side, Joseph Kennedy II is an early favorite, according to

a *Boston Herald* poll, and U.S. Representative Barney Frank is running a close second. Representatives Edward Markey (a long-time Kerry associate whom the presumptive nominee has designated as his liaison to Capitol Hill during the campaign) and Martin Meehan will put up a tough primary fight, however, as both have already started raising funds for the race—and have done exceptionally well.

And there's one more scenario to keep in mind: Romney isn't without his own political aspirations. While it's unlikely that he would nominate himself to the interim post, don't be surprised if, through the infinite magic of American politics, he ends up on the special-election ballot.

—ROB ANDERSON

## Class Will Out

CHATTING ON A MOBILE phone in the back seat of a Honda that's barreling through eastern Pennsylvania, Billionaires for Bush Co-Chair Andrew Boyd is decked out in an elegant, Old World suit made many decades ago by his immigrant grandfather. As he prepares to debark for his next event, he'll put on his top hat, his tie emblazoned with images of hundred-dollar bills ("it looks like money—in both senses of the word"), and start brandishing his plastic cigar.

It's the perfect ensemble for "bird-dogging the president" on behalf of Billionaires for Bush, a troupe of street-theater wiseacres that dates back to 2000 (originally the

Billionaires bashed both George W. Bush and Al Gore; they've since become more discriminating) that Boyd describes as a "grass-roots network of degenerate heiresses, deal-making CEOs, corporate lobbyists, and other winners under Bush's economic policies."

National Director of Public Relations Pam Perd (she won't reveal her real name, explaining, "I like being Pam Perd.") says the organization, which now has 56 chapters across the nation, was "created to expose the truth behind Bush's economic policies—that they really are in favor of the extreme wealth in this country at the expense of everyone else."

As we speak, Boyd is en route to an "Ask the President" event in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, outside of which the Billionaires will be "popping a bottle of champagne and toasting Bush as the best president that money can buy." Since January, the group has held several such thank-you rallies, chanting and singing outside presidential events and waving posters proclaiming "Corporations Are People, Too."

The organization's "Get on the Limo Swing-State Summer Tour" starts July 27 in Boston, travels through the Midwest, and ends in New York on August 29. The only thing holding the Billionaires back, apparently, is funding.

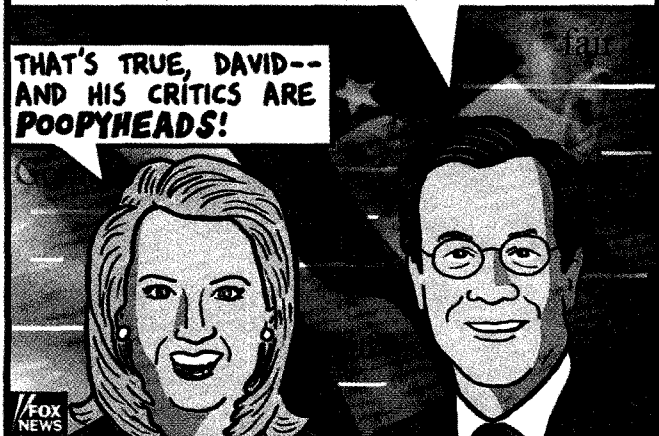
"We don't have any. And we'd love some. We've raised maybe \$15,000, not more than \$20,000, over the past six months," says Perd. "It's sort of the irony of the Billionaires."

—TARA MCKELVEY



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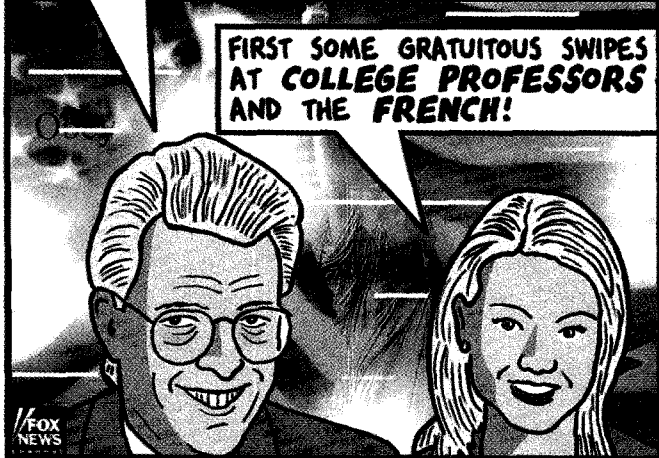


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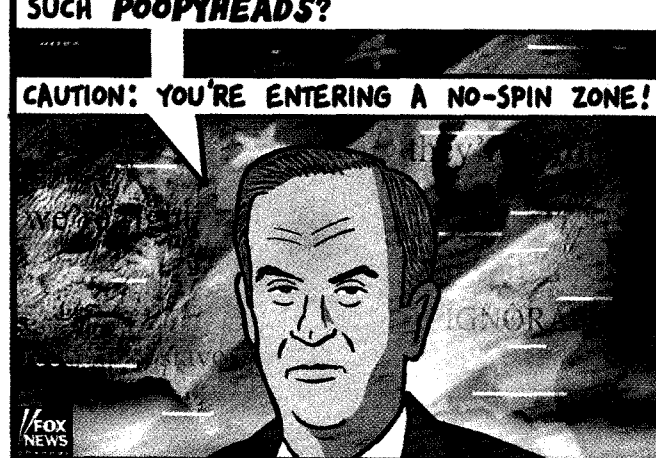


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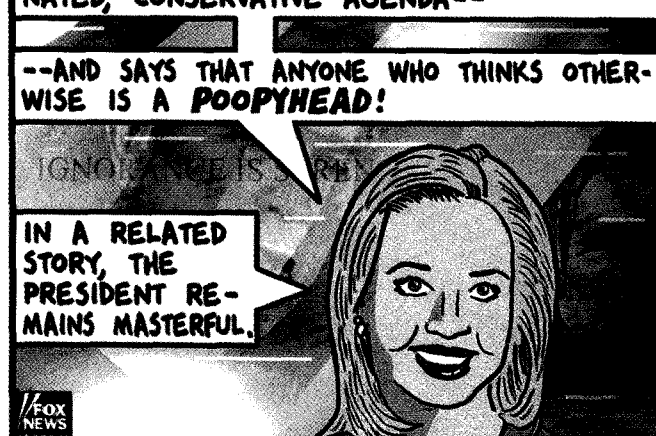
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# Dispatches



**Out of the Shadows:** Heinz Kerry watching John speak in New York City, April 2004

## Think Different

Teresa Heinz Kerry, who speaks her mind (and can do so in five languages), is not your typical politician's wife. That ought to be a *good* thing.

**BY SARAH WILDMAN**

ON A STEAMY WASHINGTON NIGHT IN early June, a moneyed crowd of gay men and lesbians gathered in the vaulted hall at the National Museum of Women in the Arts for a John Kerry fund raiser. The big draw that night was not actress Sharon Gless (*Queer As Folk*, *Cagney and Lacey*) but the arguably more entertaining, and certainly more outspoken, Teresa Heinz Kerry, wife of the candidate.

The audience embraced Heinz Kerry,

who compared her bewilderment and alienation as an immigrant in the 1960s to the ongoing alienation of the gay community in America today. She even spoke of relying at the time on her own family of friends, a concept that's long been bandied about in the gay community. But despite the warm reception, few outsiders heard about the event. That's because the press wasn't allowed.

"I can understand why the campaign shelters her," says a fund-raiser who was

there. Apparently Heinz Kerry, as she's wont to do, meandered a bit, offering her opinion that women over 65 (she's 66) are discarded by American culture. Nevertheless, "She was personal and warm and intellectual and made connections that were valuable and insightful," enthused the fund-raiser. "If she's misunderstood, I think it's because she refuses to stay on message—but maybe she's a little [too] smart for that." Heinz Kerry, the fund-raiser said, seems like "someone who sat around reading Hannah Arendt." Just the type of glowing recommendation that the campaign would surely love to suppress.

Yet Teresa Heinz Kerry, outside of her decidedly unapproachable wealth, appears to be the most genuine and approachable potential first lady the country has had in a long time. Partly that's because, despite spending her adulthood as a political spouse, her cultural cues seem to come not from Washington but from an immigrant experience. Unfortunately, her lack of pretension, not to mention lack of stump speeches, has gotten her in trouble—most notably, in her admission to *Elle* magazine's Lisa DePaulo that she and Kerry had a prenuptial agreement, and that she'd used Botox and would again. A fight with her husband over a longstanding feud with Republican Senator Rick Santorum in front of *The Washington Post*'s Mark Leibovich didn't help. After such mishaps, the campaign has sheltered her.

It's a mistake. Rather than running from Heinz Kerry's inability to self-censor, campaign strategists should harness it, exploiting her lack of artifice, her world awareness, and her activist roots. "She has been painted as someone who is nontraditional," says Rider University first-ladies historian Myra Gutin, "and someone whose background,

as American first ladies go, would seem to be exotic."

By most standards, it is. Born in Mozambique in 1938 to Portuguese colonists—Heinz Kerry's father was that country's first oncologist—she was educated in Switzerland and South Africa. She is fluent in English, French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. It was in Geneva where she met her future husband, ketchup heir John Heinz III, who would become a moderate Republican senator from Pennsylvania. Teresa moved to the United States, married Heinz in 1966, bore three boys, and remained married for 25 years, until the senator died in a plane crash in 1991.

With Heinz's death, she found herself not only bewildered and grieving but also heir to a multimillion-dollar fortune and in charge of the family foundation. Declining offers to run for

the GOP likes to pretend don't exist: immigrants, intellectuals, women with careers, second marriages, blended families. Witness the comment from über-conservative Gary Bauer, who opined that while Laura Bush "reminds Americans of themselves—someone they can talk to between the back fence or at a cookout," Heinz Kerry is just a "senator's wife associated with a great fortune and a more urbane style—a tough, opinionated lady."

It's ironic given Heinz Kerry's pretty traditional record: She came to her career after her children were grown, she espouses a family-first philosophy, and she is deeply mixed about abortion. What we come away with is the idea that while first ladies are, by definition, in a gilded cage, Democratic first ladies are in a completely untenable position: They can't be too rich or too career for

appear "uncontrollable." By the time she wrote *It Takes a Village*, she was almost unrecognizable. And, most disappointingly, she was only fully embraced after garnering sympathy during the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Invariably, when a woman is used to validate a candidate's character, she loses herself. Teresa Heinz Kerry has resisted the narrative. "I can only be me," she recently told Barbara Walters. "Americans want real people. I'm a real person ... I may not be what everybody would like to see, but it's real."

This "realness" was evident in the painful public deliberations about her name. In what was undoubtedly a heart-stopping moment for her aides, she told *USA Today* that "Teresa Heinz Kerry is my name ... for politics." As she has said many times, while she loves John Kerry, she had a long life before him, and she can't be expected to suddenly act as though she never knew anything or anyone but him. And yet, while that's the sound bite, the explanation is far rawer than we're used to from a candidate's wife; it's hard to think it won't have resonance among Americans. Heinz Kerry has sworn that she will continue her work at the foundation even if she adds a sixth home—the White House—to her stable. "She doesn't want to be involved in policy per se or hold an official job," her spokeswoman, Christine Anderson, told *The Guardian*. "She would rather keep working on the issues she cares about. She wants to keep her job to run the Heinz Endowments, and she would keep doing that if she were first lady."

We should be thrilled. Instead, Heinz Kerry makes many voters anxious. Indeed, her candor often contradicts her husband's carefully scripted (and undoubtedly field-tested) messages. "You can't talk about marginalization in a campaign that celebrates the center," says historian Gil Troy, author of *Mrs. And Mrs. President*, referring to the gay fund-raiser in Washington. "So far [Heinz Kerry] seems way too complicated, passionate, articulate, and iconoclastic to fit in a box, and that's why she's a walking danger zone."

It should be possible to have the personality—and biography—of Teresa Heinz Kerry and be a good Democrat, an

## **Heinz Kerry represents all those Americans that the GOP likes to pretend don't exist: immigrants, intellectuals, career women, second marriages, blended families.**

Heinz's Senate seat, she instead immersed herself in the foundation, becoming, by all accounts, a very savvy philanthropist at a very progressive endowment. She also founded the Heinz Awards, in memory of her husband, which recognize progressive thinkers in the arts, public policy, the human condition, technology, the environment, and economics. Four years after Heinz's death, she married John Kerry, the junior senator from Massachusetts, to whom her husband had introduced her in 1990. The pair had run into each other at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the two had, by all accounts, a modern courtship.

Exotic or not, Heinz Kerry is in many ways more typical of modern American women than her predecessors in the East Wing. She's completely upfront about the difficulties she's had syncing her family with Kerry's, and with balancing her identities in order to best support the campaign. And while she would be only the second foreign-born first lady (Louisa Adams was the first), she represents all those Americans that

cused because that will alienate mainstream America, and they can't be too traditional because that will alienate the more progressive base.

OF COURSE, CANDIDATES' WIVES HAVE always been used to help establish the iconography of the president. (Jacqueline Kennedy, hating that role, swore she'd "get pregnant and stay pregnant," as it was the "only way out" of the media maelstrom.) The drama of Ronald Reagan's funeral was made fuller by the image of the now-fragile Nancy reaching out to his coffin. Bookish Laura in 2000, who told the world that Dostoyevsky was her favorite author, made George seem a little less frivolous (despite the campaign scrubbing all the dark parts of Dostoyevsky out of her system).

It was with team Clinton in 1992, though, where it got really awful. Hillary was supposed to be a fully realized wife, mother, feminist, and lawyer, all to illustrate her husband's bona fides as a husband, father, and feminist in his own right. She was forced to retreat back into traditional roles, so as to not



asset to the candidate, and a supportive spouse. "Teresa can see and appreciate things about this country that [native-born Americans] take absolutely for granted," says Carl Sferazza Anthony, another first-ladies historian. And yet the media's gleeful recording of her every verbal hiccup, and her forceful determination to maintain some semblance of the life she has always known, has some deciding that the country simply isn't ready for such a woman. The discomfort comes partly because she highlights the distinctly ridiculous role into which we continue to force the president's wife.

Another problem is party affiliation. Democrats are expected to be more progressive, yet their wives are burdened by expectations from both sides. It explains why Heinz Kerry has been chastised for being anti-feminist by *The Washington Post*, for example, for taking the name Kerry, while simultaneously being criticized by conservatives for having too much power over envi-

ronmental issues by staying on at the Heinz Endowments. (Power? Can anyone say Halliburton?)

"Republicans have more social permission to be rich and more permission to have wives who are doing progressive things," explains historian Troy, who cites Mitch McConnell, Elaine Chao, and the Doles as good examples of well-respected Republican couples with wives in decidedly nontraditional roles. (I'd throw in the whole Cheney clan for good measure.) Troy thinks Heinz Kerry's "greatest potential as an asset will be if [her husband] can carve out an Eleanor Roosevelt role for her as an emissary to the left," like gays and women and environmentalists, "while Kerry plays center."

The bigger question is whether Heinz Kerry would want that role. Wouldn't it be nice if she actually had a choice in the matter? ■

SARAH WILDMAN is a Prospect senior correspondent.

## The Next Generation

Illinois' Barack Obama is just the most visible of a new breed of African American leaders with ambitions their forbears couldn't have imagined.

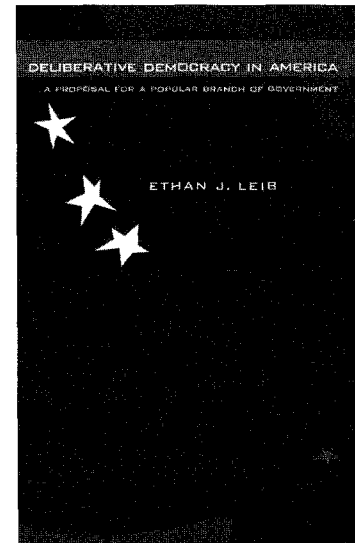
BY GARANCE FRANKE-RUTA

"BOY, THIS IS REALLY STANDING-ROOM only," complained a man outside the AFL-CIO hall in Peoria, Illinois, on a bright Tuesday morning in late June. U.S. Senate candidate Barack Obama was set to start speaking soon to the diverse crowd, and a line of people dozens deep wended its way into the packed union hall. They'd come to see the man most political observers think is destined to be the next senator from Illinois, and only the third black senator since Reconstruction.

And see him they would: Obama was hard to avoid on the news that day. His opponent, Republican millionaire Jack Ryan, had just released divorce papers the night before, in which his ex-wife, actress Jeri Ryan, accused him of dragging her to sex clubs. The press

thronged around Obama, shouts of "sexual fetish" and "scandal" filling the air as cameras edged out supporters in search of a juicy quote. But Obama wanted nothing to do with that. "Campaigns are obviously fun horse races to watch," he said. "They're great to report on, but ultimately the reason to be involved in politics is to get something done."

He ended the press conference without getting sucked into the media game. With Illinois one of the five states that has seen a net job loss in the past year, this tour of the southern part of the state was focused on the same problems that Obama started fighting two decades earlier, when he was a community organizer in Chicago. "There have been a lot of statistics



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recently saying the economy is picking back up,” Obama told the union-hall crowd. “[But] that’s not what I’m hearing from ordinary people.”

Three local blue-collar workers shared the stage with Obama, telling their stories of job loss and speaking about their fears for the future. It was the same down in Carbondale (population 25,597), near the Kentucky border, a place fragrant with magnolias and the scent of growing fields, miles of corn stretching out across the distance. Up north, heat lamps were still

guys if you come down here,” says Shomon, now Obama’s political director. Steve and Kappy Scates, corn and bean growers who own one of the largest family farms in the state, explained why. “He was very outgoing and very honest and very interested in what was going on,” recalled Steve Scates of their meeting with Obama some seven years ago in Shawneetown, where the Scates’ son is now mayor. “He relates with all individuals.”

If Obama wins his Senate race, he will be the most accomplished of a new

research by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, but only 34 percent of black elected officials under 40 did. Nearly 70 percent of those over 65 attended historically black colleges, as compared with 37 percent of those politicians under 40.

“It gives them advantages that older generations of African Americans did not have,” says David Bositis, a senior scholar at the center. Obama repeatedly reminded voters of this during his primary campaign, telling them, “I’m of the African American community, but not limited by it.”

Where older black politicians tended to be products of a segregated communities and local political cultures, the new leaders, thanks to the gains of the civil-rights movement, grew up in an integrated world (though not always easily so). Many attended elite, white educational institutions. Though still rooted in and nurtured by predominantly black political districts, the new generation’s comfort in a highly competitive, integrated world may well allow its members to reach out across the racial lines they have been bridging their whole lives and gain support in white districts as well.

“The African American community is not divorced from larger trends in the country,” Obama tells me as we roll past fields of Illinois corn in his campaign SUV. “It’s harder to obtain leadership positions in a modern, highly technological society without some familiarity with the institutions of leadership.” Today, the new African American leaders have the statewide and national ambitions to match the backgrounds their political forebears couldn’t have imagined.

Obama graduated from Columbia University and was the first black president of the *Harvard Law Review*. He then went on to become a civil-rights attorney and University of Chicago Law School instructor. His wife, Michelle, is also an attorney; they met at Harvard Law School. Obama wrote in his memoir of his ambition to “learn power’s currency in all its intricacy and detail.”

In the past decade, the new political class has repeatedly challenged the older generation for seats representing largely black districts, and with



**On Point:** Barack Obama campaigns in Peoria, Illinois, June 2004

being used to warm outdoor diners, but down here, when former Georgia Senator Max Cleland joked that it was nice to be back in the South, he got a round of knowing applause and laughter from the audience at an Obama fund-raiser he headlined.

Obama is not an unfamiliar face here. Back in 1997, the freshman state senator from the south side of Chicago and aide Dan Shomon piled golf clubs into Obama’s beat-up Jeep Cherokee and went on a downstate tour, meeting with farmers, greeting small-town mayors, and learning what life was like. Obama won an impressive 25 percent of the more conservative downstate Democratic vote in that primary and made many friends who support him to this day.

“Illinois is very friendly to Chicago

generation of African American political leaders and the sole black member of the U.S. Senate. His supporters tell me repeatedly that Obama is an “individual.” And certainly, as the biracial son of a Kenyan father and Kansan mother, raised in Hawaii and Indonesia, he has an unusual biography, which he details in his wonderfully written 1995 memoir, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. But Obama is also very much a member of his generation, a new generation of black political leaders.

IN RECENT DECADES, THE BACKGROUND of black politicians gaining elective office has changed dramatically. A whopping 76 percent of black elected officials over age 65 had attended segregated high schools, according to



increasing success. Artur Davis, who was a first-year student at Harvard Law School when Obama was in his third year, challenged incumbent Earl Hilliard in the 2000 primary to represent the 63-percent black district in central and western Alabama. He lost that fight, but came back in 2002 to win the seat. This year, he easily won his primary, which will return him to office in the heavily Democratic and impoverished congressional district, the third poorest in the nation. "I'm very encouraged by what's happening," says Davis, 36.

Obama challenged then four-term Congressman and former Black Panther Bobby Rush in 2000—a move Obama now attributes to "impatience"—and got walloped by 30 percentage points in the primary. But this year he saw an opportunity that allowed him to do

Attorney Corey Booker, 35, went to Yale Law School and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford before joining the Newark City Council in Newark, New Jersey. He, too, lost his first major race against a member of the older generation, five-term Newark Mayor Sharpe James. Booker plans to run again for mayor in 2006. In Washington, technocrat Anthony Williams—who graduated from Yale College, Harvard Law School and the Kennedy School of Government—trounced the Reverend Willie Wilson, an ally of former Mayor Marion Barry, in the 2002 mayoral primary (and has tried hard to undo Barry's legacy of racial distrust since first winning office in 1998, drawing heavy support from the city's white wards). Nor are the new mayoral leaders—and would-be leaders—limited to majority black cities like Wash-

**These new leaders' comfort in a highly competitive, integrated world allows them to reach out across the racial lines they have been bridging their whole lives.**

some things Rush probably could never do: appeal across racial lines to the collar counties around Chicago and forge a coalition among white liberals, moderates, and blacks to become a U.S. senator.

Today, Obama is trying to marry the downstate appeal of the late, beloved Senator Paul Simon—whose children have endorsed him, campaigned for him, and given him one of Simon's bow ties, which Obama now carries in his pocket wherever he goes—and the Chicago base of former Mayor Harold Washington, the city's first black mayor.

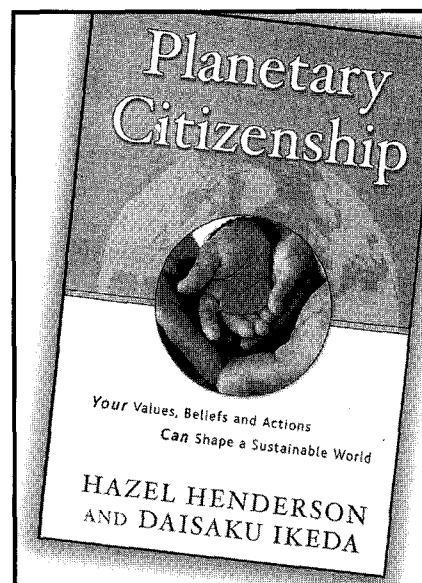
Obama is not blazing this trail alone. Representative Harold Ford Jr. was a young man in a hurry when he won his father's congressional seat in Tennessee at age 26, just months after earning his law degree at the University of Michigan (his undergraduate degree is from the University of Pennsylvania). He makes no secret of having ambitions to run for statewide office in Tennessee. In Alabama, meanwhile, Davis hopes to run for governor or senator one day.

ington and Newark; 58 percent of the nation's black mayors lead cities that are mostly white.

IN AN ERA IN WHICH ETHNIC AND racial diversity are heralded as the result of liberal values, it's also important to recall that the presence of large numbers of African Americans in some regions of the United States and not in others is, in fact, a legacy of America's most illiberal chapter. When it comes to black elected officials, geography has for too long been destiny.

Despite nearly a century's worth of movement away from the former Confederacy, where 90 percent of blacks lived until 1910, today 55 percent of blacks continue to reside in the South, and most live in just 22 states. Thus it should come as no surprise that, in 2001, of the top 10 states with the highest number of black elected officials, only two were in the north: Michigan and Illinois, the Land of Lincoln.

This demography has created unique challenges for African American politicians with national or state-



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wide ambitions. Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana may lead the way in the election of black officials, but they are also places where white voters are less likely to vote across racial lines.

Illinois, however, is different. It has both a fairly middle-of-the-road voting public and—unlike many liberal northern states—a fairly substantial black population, close to 14 percent. “Illinois has probably elected more black statewide officials than any state in the country,” says Bositis.

That makes Obama’s task somewhat easier. His election would not be entirely without precedent: African American Senator Carol Moseley Braun forged that path in 1992. But where Moseley Braun was a pure product of

the Cook County Democratic machine and stumbled from office in a swirl of ethics charges, Obama has the background and connections that should allow him to flourish. Already, he has raised more money—\$4 million in the second quarter—for his general-election contest than any Senate contender in Illinois history, plus he has found former President Bill Clinton and current Senator Hillary Clinton to be ready allies (both have helped him raise funds).

Moseley Braun once said during her recent run for the presidency that she wants her political epitaph to be that she did the best she could with what she had. It’s a sentiment that may be true of Obama, as well. The critical difference is that he has had so much more. ■

of Wes Boyd and Joan Blades, work out of their Berkeley, California, home. Their expenses for 2001-2002 totaled \$246,412. (From 2002-2003, their expenses jumped to \$2,326,629.)

But MoveOn’s efforts are far from low-key. So far, it’s attracted more than 2.9 million members in the United States and overseas, says field director Adam Ruben, 34. (Anytime a person volunteers time, donates money, or signs a petition, he or she becomes a member.) That’s bigger than the Christian Coalition ever was. (The Christian Coalition’s national field director, Bill Thomson, says his group is now at its peak with 2.1 million members.) Members live in every state across the United States, and they range from a 21-year-old University of Southern California student to a 38-year-old health-care researcher in Reston, Virginia, to a 73-year-old retired schoolteacher in Sun City, Arizona.

Unlike organizations such as Emily’s List or the Sierra Club, MoveOn doesn’t focus on a single issue. As an affinity group, it attracts different kinds of people who are passionate about everything from mercury poisoning to “black box” voting machines to global warming. Updates on these issues—as well as opportunities for members to get involved in campaigns focusing on them—are posted regularly on MoveOn’s Web site. Lately, though, anti-Bush sentiment has helped MoveOn focus its goals.

In January, CBS refused to run MoveOn’s \$1.6 million, 30-second “Child’s Pay” ad (an attack on the deficit) during the Super Bowl, and national media like *Good Morning America* and *Nightline* picked up the story. Since then, MoveOn has managed to turn this election year into one in which Americans of all stripes talk about the president’s misdeeds.

“They are making a case to defeat Bush and are, in some respects, better than the Democratic National Committee and the Kerry campaign in getting people involved,” says Michael Cornfield, author of *Politics Moves Online*. “They’re out there every week, getting the word out. If [John] Kerry wins, of course they deserve credit.”

Part of the key to MoveOn’s impact is its activist membership. Even its leaders acknowledge that. “Cesar Chavez

## Onward and Forward

Since its founding in 1998, MoveOn has influenced everything from impeachment to war. Its secret: always giving members something to do.

BY TARA MCKELVEY

ON A BLUSTERY MARCH DAY, PETER Schurman, the executive director of MoveOn.org, stands next to a Win Without War poster at a press conference on Capitol Hill. Schurman is a 34-year-old Yale School of Management graduate with a high forehead, blue eyes, and razor-sharp features who doesn’t like to talk about himself. He’s not a touchy-feely kind of guy. Yet a middle-aged woman in a gray sweater, Sue Niederer, is hugging him in front of a group of reporters. She has lost her son, Lieutenant Seth Dvorin, in the Iraq War, and she clutches Schurman’s coat, twisting the fabric with her fingers. He stands next to her, stiffly, as tears run down her face. Finally, she untangles herself.

“Get them home, and not in a box,” she says. “That’s all I care about.”

Even Schurman is moved: He pats her shoulder and murmurs a few comforting words. Still, he is from Maine. Instead of getting all blubbery, he and a group of volunteers set to work in front of the Cannon Office Building, assembling petitions (560,340 of them)

that call for President Bush to be censured for misleading the nation on the reasons for the Iraq War. Then he walks the halls of Congress and delivers the petitions, letting photographers from *Newsweek* and *Time* scoot ahead to take pictures. It’s a masterful media moment—and the latest in a string of high-profile events MoveOn has designed to make George W. Bush look very, very bad.

MoveOn may only be less than 6 years old, but it’s a gigantic, noisy, attention-getting youngster that’s having a big impact on this year’s election, raising millions, bringing in hundreds of thousands of new recruits, and galvanizing grass-roots activists in a way that hasn’t been seen since the 1970s. At first glance, the organization, which is actually three separate entities—a 501(c)(4) that focuses on education and advocacy work, a political action committee (PAC) that helps progressives get elected, and a “527” voter-education organization—seems like a folksy operation. Its founders, the husband-and-wife team



used to say, "There are two sources for power: money and people," says Ruben, who's done grass-roots organizing for U.S. PIRG and the Sierra Club. "If it weren't for our members, we'd be 10 people with a lot of great ideas. As it happens, we have more than 2 million people who agree to those ideas and are willing to do something about them."

The other reason MoveOn works so well is that the group makes it easy for members to "do something." Tracy Westen, a USC Annenberg School for Communication professor who studies grass-roots organizing, says, "The '50s were supposed to be an apathetic generation and then—boom—came the '60s: Vietnam War, civil rights, marches and sit-ins. In those days, though, participating took a lot of effort. MoveOn lets you do it in a few easy steps."

Here's how it works: MoveOn staffers will post an announcement on the organization's Web Site and ask for donations of time or money. On March 24, for example, they asked members to sponsor an ad featuring Richard Clarke. Six days later, the \$300,000 ad appeared on FOX and CNN. (MoveOn's members are a generous bunch: According to Campaigns Director Eli Pariser, from November 10, 2003, through February 28, 2004, more than 100,000 members gave money in small donations, raising \$5 million during that period.)

On March 16, two days after Donald Rumsfeld, appearing on *Face the Nation*, falsely denied that administration officials had ever used the phrase "imminent threat" to describe the former Iraqi regime, Adam Feinstein, a 31-year-old Brooklyn filmmaker and MoveOn member, was prepping the segment for Internet streaming. The footage was posted on MoveOn's site the following day with a tag line that read, "It's time for the deception to stop."

"For ordinary citizens to have an impact on public dialogue while it's happening—that's just unheard of," says Cornfield. "It's like with Jay Leno and David Letterman. They work in a 24-hour cycle, and they're quick with their comments. In the same way, MoveOn is ready. But they get more than a laugh. They get money."

Even MoveOn's critics think it's on the right track.

"Believe me, these people are very savvy," says a CBS spokesman who is still peeved over the Super Bowl fracas. "As soon as the ad was rejected, they held a press conference. Between you and me, I'd do the same thing if I were on their side. I'm a PR guy."

IN SEPTEMBER 1998, BLADES AND BOYD were just another couple of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs having lunch in a Chinese restaurant. Together, they had founded Berkeley Systems, which created the "Flying Toaster" screensavers. On her own, Blades had written a book called *Mediate Your Divorce*, which had ensured her a steady income.

Then, explains Blades, they overheard someone at the next table talking about "how crazy the impeachment fixation was." A couple of days later, on September 18, 1998, Blades and Boyd set up an

working together on press events and fund raising. Boyd says MoveOn hasn't earmarked contributions to Kerry to date, but it has highlighted the Kerry Web site to its members in the belief that "at least several million dollars were contributed to the campaign as a result." In addition, Boyd says, the MoveOn PAC is committed to a \$50 million campaign through November—\$10 million for get-out-the-vote activities, \$20 million for advertising that shows why Bush is a bad choice for the presidency, and \$20 million in earmarked contributions "for candidates from Kerry down to state level races."

Today, MoveOn inspires the kind of obsessive love usually reserved for Bikram yoga: It is "one of the joys of my life," says Heather Booth, 58, a Washington-based consultant and activist. Anne Lamott is "deeply grateful"

**"For ordinary citizens to have an impact on public dialogue while it's happening—that's just unheard of," says an observer. "They work in a 24-hour cycle."**

online petition, "Censure President Clinton and Move On to Pressing Issues Facing the Nation." They sent the petition out to some friends, who then passed it on. Eventually, more than 500,000 people had signed on.

Since then, their success or failure has been directly tied to the issue they've chosen to highlight. In 2000, they focused on local congressional races, and eventually gave out \$2.4 million to 30 men and women running for office; 13 of them won seats in the House and Senate. In 2002, they focused their efforts on the environment and campaign-finance reform—a tactical error because the public wasn't passionate about the latter. By August, they had only 450,000 members, writes Cornfield, fewer than the number of people who'd signed their original Clinton petition. That year, they distributed a paltry \$127,000 to House and Senate candidates.

But Bush's war plans helped them get back on track. MoveOn formed a partnership with an organization called Win Without War in the fall of 2002,

to the group (at least according to her blurb for MoveOn's book, *50 Ways to Love Your Country*). Arianna Huffington says MoveOn is her "political Viagra."

Still, MoveOn has room to grow.

"Their weaknesses are they never win a major campaign. They tried to stop the [Iraq] War. They tried to get Bill Clinton censured," says Cornfield. "Their other weakness is they're focused on saying, 'Stop this,' not, 'Do this.' They're experimenting with coming up with good policy proposals, but they haven't figured it out."

While MoveOn may not have a comprehensive set of policy statements to present to the public, it has created a uniquely energized movement in 21st-century politics—and an enticing foil for Bush.

"The challenge," says Schurman about the next step, "is how we retake control of our government. Most people would rather have peace than war, and they want to leave a better world for our kids. The majority of people agree with us, and we really just have to organize them." ■

# "The Evil Was Very Grave ..."

José Martí's description of our 1884 election sounds eerily contemporary.

BY FRANCISCO GOLDMAN

THE CUBAN INDEPENDENCE HERO AND poet José Martí lived in New York from 1880 to 1895. He was a New Yorker, and easily the most important literary figure then residing in the city (after Walt Whitman's departure to rural New Jersey). During most of those years he made his living as a journalist, writing about the United States for the readers of Latin America's most important newspapers. His U.S. crónicas take up more than 2,000 pages of his collected works—an unrivaled treasure of information, detail, in-

sight, analysis, and thought about America's Gilded Age, all written in a vibrant, poetic prose that revolutionized the Spanish language. (Guillermo Cabrera Infante calls Martí's newspaper prose the greatest baroque instrument in the Spanish language since Francisco de Quevedo, the 17th-century Spanish poet imprisoned by the Inquisition.)

A keen observer of politics, Martí closely followed the presidential election of 1884, which pitted Republican James G. Blaine against Democrat

Grover Cleveland. It is often called one of the dirtiest campaigns in American history. The Republicans exposed Cleveland as having fathered a child out of wedlock. Cleveland acknowledged paternity, weathered the storm, and went on to win what was also one of the closest elections in American history, 48.5 percent to 48.2 percent.

Martí devoted more than a hundred pages to the Blaine-Cleveland race. I've translated just a few excerpts, which appear below. As you read them, you will be reminded of a presidential election altogether more recent than the one of 1884.

FRANCISCO GOLDMAN *lives in Brooklyn and Mexico City. His new novel, The Divine Husband, in which José Martí figures as a character, will be published by Atlantic Monthly Press in September.*

"It's brutal, and nauseating, a presidential campaign in the United States. The mud comes up to the chairs. The white beards of the newspapers forget all about the decorum of old age. They dump buckets of mud on all our heads. They knowingly lie and exaggerate. They stab each other in the belly and the back. Any defamation is treated as legitimate. Every blow is good, as long as it staggers the enemy. He who invents an effective slander proudly struts ... A good faith observer has no idea how to analyze a battle in which everyone considers it legitimate to campaign in bad faith.

But he who observes this country without rancor, as much as he is disgusted by the primacy ceded to the appetites here, and the forgetfulness, if not the disdain, in which the generous qualities are held, also has to recognize that whenever it appears that a danger is imminent, or that an institution has been profaned beyond redemption, or that some vice has devoured half the nation, there arises, with the reliability of a law, and without great apparatus, and when the evil can still be cured, the men and systems that can avoid ruin. They appear, do what they have to do, and drop from sight. And it also appears that a condition of this law is that the evil has to be extreme, as if the prosperous peoples never decide to change direction, or perturb their habits, until the reality becomes so dire that it is impossible to ignore.



A Friend Writes: Cuban intellectual José Martí

This was the law affirmed by the election of Grover Cleveland. The evil was very grave: the Republicans, entrenched in power, cynically abused it; they subverted the integrity of the vote, and of the press; they mocked the spirit of the Constitution through partisan legislation, and copying the tactics of tyrants, used overseas wars to deflect attention from their actions. Who had a chance to compete against them? Defeat them?—if elections are won by the force of money, if the Republicans have a free hand with the national coffers?

But a wave rose up that no one saw forming on the margins, and no one knows how it came, breaking over the heads of all the ambitious and illustrious politicians of the nation—despite the anger of the members of his own Democratic party, despite time-proven practices and conceits—and landed in the White House a man just a little more than barely known, a tough but humble man, fit for the task of fearlessly and patiently reforming the corrupt government ... the wave brought Cleveland.

Up close you see that the change has not been essential or durable, but circumstantial and like a proof: an eruption proving that it can be done: that the eruption of a fistful of men, a fistful of honorable people, nothing more than that, have given victory to Cleveland—a thousand votes less, among ten million voters, and the president would have been an impure and sinister man, a brilliant sofist: he would have been Blaine." ■



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# The Kerry I Know

So he's not Mr. Charisma. But he has courage, judgment, and intellect. Imagine that!

BY THOMAS OLIPHANT

THE FIRST TWO TIMES I DEALT WITH JOHN KERRY, WHEN he had his initial brush with notoriety many years ago, I didn't know what to make of him. It was actually a little later, after he had screwed up and taken one on the jaw, that I became intrigued by him. He lost his first political fight, and deserved to; but instead of slinking off to a privileged corner of his world, he decided on a slow climb up the public-service ladder. Not for the last time, his grit surprised me.

Now, on the threshold of his more than decent shot at the presidency, something un-chic has occurred to me: Odds are that he could be a successful, even excellent, president. No hero worship here. Knowing somebody is supposed to mean knowing him as a human being, zits and all. Part of my confidence involves the meeting of a particular kind of public figure and his times; part of it is this inner drive of his that survived the bright flash of sudden fame that burns out just as quickly and accepted the non-flashy way up the ladder so long ago.

I like Kerry a lot. I admire how he got to this place. And I think he is well-prepared to preside over the sausage making that lies ahead of him if he wins this fall. It is likely to be a tough grind—more or less the way he likes it. (His successful discussions with John Edwards about a partnership displayed a sensible pol with the confidence to reach beyond his familiar world; the fact that my genius daughter helped discover “two Americas” for Edwards and now writes for the ticket only proves again that she has figured things out faster than I have.)

In non-Bush America, a far more prevalent symbol of sentiment these days, rather than outright affection for Kerry, is the “Anybody But Bush” pin. Anybody But Bush avoids Kerry. It also contains more than a little bit of disdain and disrespect—common attitudes in a modern Democratic Party that seems able to take the concept of unity only so far. Democrats (political writers, too) love second-guessing, relentless kibitzing, pseudo-biographical psychobabble. In today's political culture, progressives tend to be neurotic, conservatives fanatical.

The best cure for this neurosis is not artificially induced adulation but a rational decision to recognize Kerry's strengths. This is a contemplative, serious person—well-grounded in progressive principles—who has the good habit of getting interested in new ideas that survive scrutiny. His work habits reveal an iron butt for grunt work, as well as considerable experience in working across party lines. A non-Bush president will have to repair considerable damage abroad and at home, complex tasks that will resist grand

fixes and reward the patience and tough negotiating that are Kerry attributes. But a non-Bush president will also have to think and act big and new, and the work Kerry has already done on a range of issues should inspire confidence.

He is a sober yet imaginative person for sobering, dangerous times, but his looks and wealth conceal the steel that got him this far and often cause him to be underestimated. It was a long, strange trip, hardly befitting someone with a first-class education who married money twice.

AFTER KERRY RETURNED FOR GOOD FROM VIETNAM, HE impulsively entered one of the era's many congressional fights in which pro-war politicians were being challenged: a weirdly gerrymandered Massachusetts district that stretched from the western Boston suburbs north toward New Hampshire. The year was 1970, and the incumbent was a go-along Senate Armed Services Committee stalwart, Phil Philbin, ripe for the plucking.

The anti-war candidates had agreed to abide by a vote at a mass gathering of the principal organization in the state, Massachusetts Political Action for Peace (MassPAX). The overwhelming favorite was the Reverend Robert Drinan, then dean of the Boston College Law School. But during the MassPAX meeting at Concord-Carlisle High School, Kerry made a riveting speech—previewing themes of soldier betrayal and new-recruit determination the nation would hear the following year in Washington—that won high praise. Kerry still lost, but I kept his phone number and made sure I stayed in touch as he became involved in the fledgling Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

What Kerry did in the spring of 1971 still amazes me. The power and eloquence of his statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee gets most of the attention because the film survives, but what amazed me more was the quiet leadership he and a few pals showed in guiding perhaps 2,000 veterans—many severely wounded, angry, bitter, and passionate—for a week that stunned the country with its non-violent effectiveness.

At the time, Kerry told me that he assumed his actions had precluded a political career, a sentiment experience had taught me to share. I was surprised, therefore, to hear of his intention to run for Congress in the McGovern year of 1972 in a Massachusetts district centered on the blue-collar city of Lowell. Not surprisingly to me, the rookie made a mess of





his race. Anti-war fervor in the Democratic Party had propelled George McGovern past Edmund Muskie, and Kerry's congressional campaign was at first almost entirely based on Vietnam. But a changing economy had made the area around Lowell, always a redoubt of lunch-pail economics anyway, unusually interested in what a new Congress would do for ordinary people. By the time Kerry realized his message was way off-key, it was too late; 1972 was a McGovern year in the spring, but it was a Nixon year in the fall.

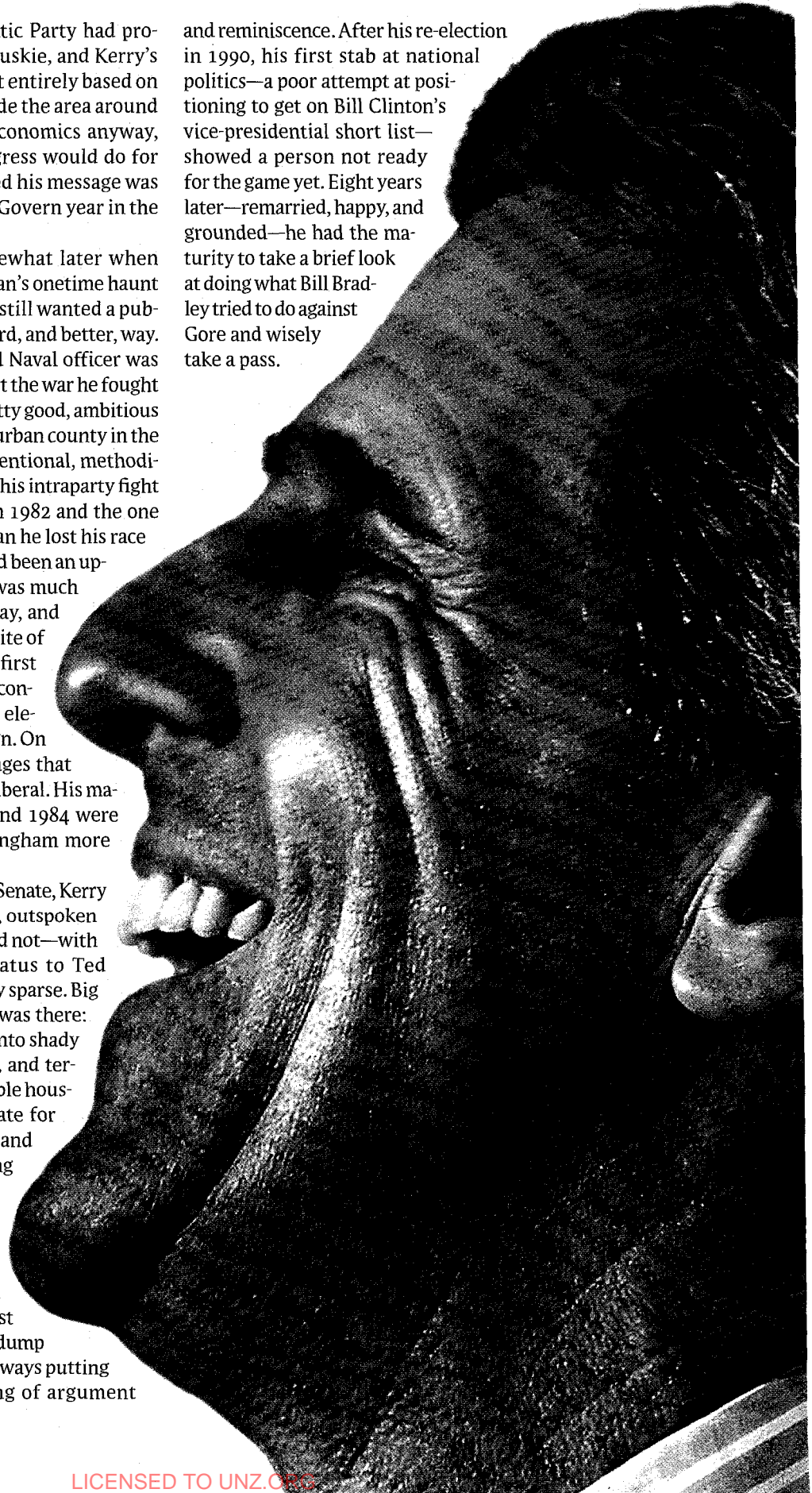
I was more pleasantly surprised somewhat later when Kerry told me he had decided to enter Drinan's onetime haunt at Boston College Law School. I sensed he still wanted a public life, but now he was going to do it the hard, and better, way.

A young guy who had been a decorated Naval officer was among the most effective spokesmen against the war he fought in; a rather typical liberal then became a pretty good, ambitious local prosecutor in the most important suburban county in the state. His rise up the ladder was now conventional, methodical. It has always impressed me that he won his intraparty fight for the lieutenant-governor nomination in 1982 and the one for the Senate in 1984 much differently than he lost his race for Congress in 1972. The younger Kerry had been an up-scale, one-issue candidate; this older guy was much less the darling of Beacon Hill, the Back Bay, and the nicer suburbs and much more the favorite of the older suburbs and tougher cities. The first thing an observer noticed was the veterans' connection that would become such a visible element years later in his presidential campaign. On top of that, Kerry grafted ideas and messages that were much more Democratic than merely liberal. His majorities in the primary victories of 1982 and 1984 were from Lawrence and Fall River and Framingham more than Cambridge and Brookline.

From the beginning of his 20 years in the Senate, Kerry was able to deal maturely—as his pricklier, outspoken predecessor, the late Paul Tsongas, often did not—with the overwhelming fact of his junior status to Ted Kennedy. Kerry's legislation list is relatively sparse. Big deal. What he did, though, was take what was there: foreign policy, high-profile investigations into shady international businesses, crime and drugs, and terrorism. He became a true expert on affordable housing, a passionate and authoritative advocate for the public financing of federal elections, and gradually emerged, with Al Gore, as a leading spokesman on energy and the environment.

In our meetings and meals during his first term, though, it was occasionally obvious that a painful separation and divorce had left his life unsettled and not all that happy. I remember dinners during that first Senate term when I would drop him off at a dump of an apartment in Foggy Bottom, almost always putting a damper on an otherwise lively evening of argument

and reminiscence. After his re-election in 1990, his first stab at national politics—a poor attempt at positioning to get on Bill Clinton's vice-presidential short list—showed a person not ready for the game yet. Eight years later—remarried, happy, and grounded—he had the maturity to take a brief look at doing what Bill Bradley tried to do against Gore and wisely take a pass.



Instead, he worked like a dog as a Gore surrogate in New Hampshire, and this time around was a natural finalist for vice president.

And, finally, to the present, and his own race. When Kennedy took Kerry around eastern Iowa (largely working class and Catholic) shortly after intervening to turn the latter's sagging, résumé-based presidential campaign around, the senior senator regularly used a story that captures the best of Kerry's last two decades. As Kennedy told it, accurately, there was nothing to be gained and much possibly to be lost when Kerry and John McCain set out in the 1980s to bind up the country's wounds from the Vietnam War. For months on end, there was not a syllable of press coverage as they painstakingly put old prisoner and missing-in-action myths to rest and began assembling the case for establishing relations with Hanoi. Inch by inch, they brought the country along with them. From a master of hard political work like Kennedy, it was deserved praise, and a genuine sign of what Kerry is capable of.

AFTER NINE TIMES AROUND THE TRACK, I'M CONVINCED that the presidency is something that requires more fate than ambition. Sometime Jupiter aligns with Mars, sometimes it doesn't. And when Kerry started campaigning in earnest in early 2003, he—not for the first time in his career—came out of the blocks miserably. Since 1982, every one of his fights has required a second wind. What I think is most relevant to a possible Kerry presidency is that he has, up until now, always listened to criticism when he has been screwing up, and he has responded forcefully.

The initial year of his presidential campaign was almost fatal because of two rookie mistakes influenced by hubris: Kerry bought into front-runner-ism via fund-raising yardsticks, and, worse, he bought into a presentation based mostly on himself, his war record, and his résumé. What was missing from the calculus was a Democratic electorate in Iowa and New Hampshire (and nationally) that was more interested in how national policy might improve its members' lives, not just in Iraq or even in the much-celebrated "anger."

What I still find arresting is that Kerry not only listened and responded to the simple message that he was tanking, a regular occurrence in the political career of someone who mostly understands that campaigning doesn't come naturally to him; he also took his new campaign manager and communications director straight from the top of Kennedy's Senate staff, more at his senior colleague's insistence than recommendation. Not only that, Kerry had the guts to walk away from the reason (the importance of neighboring New Hampshire's primary) that there have been so many New England presidential candidates over the last four decades (John F. Kennedy, Muskie, Ted Kennedy, John F. Kennedy, George Bush Senior, Michael Dukakis, and Tsongas).

People come up with shrewd and brilliant ideas in presidential politics all the time, but the tactic of Kerry's will be studied for ages. Based on the diagnosis that he was sinking like a stone in New Hampshire, the recommended cure was to leave the state after mid-December and try to use Iowa (where he

was also plummeting) as a slingshot to propel him back into contention in the Granite State. Put yourself in Kerry's shoes as he decided he had to give up on neighboring New Hampshire and head west; it took balls. It also took discipline to talk, town after rural town, much more about kitchen-table economics and less about foreign affairs and *much* less about himself. Kerry's comeback was a lot of things, but it was not out of character. Once again, it was the more difficult path to success.

It's also helpful to know that his comeback was political and personal, but—quite contrary to the "flip-flop" label the Bush team has sought to stick on him—it did not involve a single change in his approach to the big questions of our day. Normally, positions on issues don't work well for me as clues to a presidency, or as stand-alone reasons to be for someone. In Kerry's case, however, he has made three contributions—in health care, on energy, and in foreign policy—to the national discussion over the past year that are vintage Kerry and powerful evidence of how his political mind works. They are not derivative, and, in each instance, the contributions were formulated not by the pollsters or the advisers but by Kerry himself.

On health care, as Kerry grappled with the mess of today's nonsystem, he made a critical conceptual breakthrough in his analysis of why the great attempt in 1993–94 under Bill and Hillary Clinton flopped. In his mind, and he's correct, the problem was that universal-coverage schemes tend to focus on the roughly 15 percent of the public that lacks insurance at any given moment, instead of the 85 percent who have what could be charitably called coverage (many of whom despise it almost to apoplexy).

Kerry's second conceptual contribution was his determination to find and use savings from inside the wasteful status quo to finance health care's reform and expansion, focusing on the third of all health-care costs that are not clinical. His third was to invest in and use new technology and other qualitative strides in medicine to accumulate still more savings. His fourth was to build toward universality using the existing mix of private and public delivery systems, not to jerry-rig a new one, the best example being his endorsement of tax credits to assist individuals who want to buy into the choice-laden federal employees' health-insurance plan.

Finally, to deal with viciously escalating insurance costs, Kerry went for the idea of federalizing catastrophic costs, above \$50,000 for a condition or illness. After careful vetting (a version of this had been on the table as far back as the Nixon administration; more recently, it has attracted considerable business support), he was able to claim that this would reduce insurance costs an average of \$1,000 per beneficiary. This is vintage Kerry: part traditional progressive (meaning Ted Kennedy), part new thinking, and designed politically for swing voters in Congress.

His conceptual contribution on energy was similar in its focus on using the existing energy business system, as opposed to new taxes or general revenues, to produce a revenue stream for investments in new technologies for old fuels like coal and natural gas, as well as renewables. The idea is to use royalty payments from oil and gas exploration

**Put yourself in Kerry's shoes as he decided to give up on New Hampshire and head west; it took balls.**



to finance a trust fund for conservation and renewable investments that could, over a decade, reduce imports by 2 million barrels per day—about what comes from the Persian Gulf currently. It is an investment both in lower energy costs and in economic growth in new industries. It is also a plan designed to avoid many of the regional and special-interest political fights that have bedeviled presidents for 30 years.

Kerry sought from the beginning to plan big on the energy front, both to find a grand, worthy national effort along the lines of the space program in the 1960s and to serve a larger foreign-policy purpose. A national policy to gradually end the addiction to imports from the Persian Gulf is likely to do far more to “transform the Middle East,” to borrow the silly Bush phraseology, than invading Iraq almost unilaterally with no workable plan for the aftermath. Kerry would back it up with a reactivation of the Middle East peace process, with an activist United States at the center again and allies and moderate Arab states enlisted to provide aid to—and put pressure on—the Palestinian Authority. A long period of tacit and not so tacit acquiescence in Ariel Sharon’s postures and actions would cease. Vigorous diplomacy—in his conviction that it really works, Kerry is very much his foreign-service-officer father’s son—would define him in large part, not merely in the Middle East but also in Iraq, Iran, and North Korea; with trade agreements; the Kyoto Protocol process; and the various non-proliferation regimes. My pal Mark Shields once observed that, more often than not, each president is the stylistic antithesis of his predecessor. Kerry is a worker as well as a thinker.

Kerry has also shrewdly insisted—from the beginning of his campaign—on a requirement, as economic policy, that the budget deficit be halved within four years in order to keep the business recovery from hitting a wall of higher interest rates. It is often noted, accurately, that Kerry seeks a return to the basic ideas Bob Rubin followed for Bill Clinton in the ’90s. What the observation misses, however, is the fact that Clinton got all the way through his first campaign in 1992 decrying the economy’s stagnation and advocating stimulus. Kerry, by contrast, has stuck his neck out on fiscal sanity almost from the moment he declared. Kerry is a real Democrat in his commitment to significant new expenditures on priorities like health care, education, energy independence, child care, and additional tax breaks for the middle class and working poor. However, he is also a New Democrat in his belief that the overall context must be anti-deficit for the sake of long-term economic growth.

Kerry is not by instinct a visionary, which is both a statement of fact and a legitimate criticism. He will have to work hard on coherent statements of purpose. Beginning in Iowa, however, I noticed two constant themes that got through to the caucus-goers and then to the primary voters in New Hampshire who made his nomination inevitable: that encouraging and rewarding work as a government priority should dwarf rewarding wealth, and that combating inter-

national terrorism and promoting America’s interests in a dangerous world are tasks that require allies.

Kerry’s other, overarching political thought is that the election of a Democratic president this year would liberate an unknowable number of governance-minded Republicans from the iron grip of the GOP’s congressional leadership, no matter who is in the majority. In the House of Representatives especially, the party discipline Tom DeLay can invoke on President Bush’s behalf would almost by definition be less powerful under a President Kerry. On any given domestic issue, there would be 20 or more Republicans available with the proper enticements and atmosphere. For those to the left of center who recall that JFK’s belief in 1960 was that the country could do better, not that it could be revolutionized, Kerry is the kind of person and politician I believe to be worth trusting for this grubby, central task of coalition building.

IN HIS REMARKABLY THOROUGH BOOK ON KERRY’S FORMATIVE youth, Douglas Brinkley tells a story about the two of

us in the moments just before Kerry began his statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1971. We had walked from the Vietnam veterans’ encampment on the National Mall together, taking a detour while he defused a potentially volatile demonstration outside the Supreme Court. When we entered the Dirksen Senate Office Building and raced up the stairs a few minutes before he was due to speak, we were struck by the absence of people in the stairwell and in the long corridor approaching the hearing room. It felt like a Sunday.

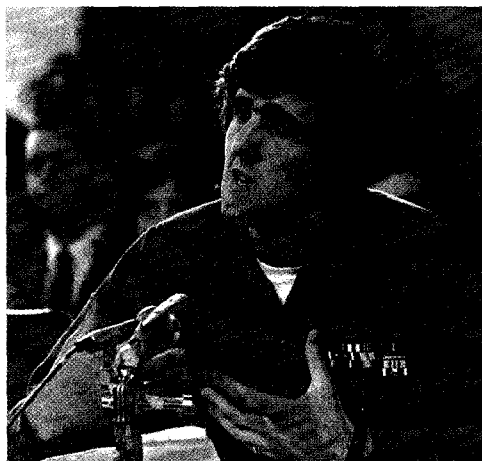
But when we reached the door and

opened it a crack, Kerry drew back suddenly, stunned at the sight of a completely packed room. I nudged him forward again and attempted to cut the tension by saying, “Go ahead. Be famous. See if I care.”

It never occurred to me or to him where that moment might one day lead. I think it’s important that the presidency looms on his horizon not as a codicil in some trust fund, a virtual entitlement by virtue of lucky birth. Instead, it looms at the end of a long climb up the ladder from assistant county prosecutor.

John Kerry is a good, tough man. He is curious, grounded after a public and personal life that has not always been pleasant, a fan of ideas whose practical side has usually kept him from policy wonkery, a natural progressive with the added fixation on what works that made FDR and JFK so interesting. I know it is chic to be disdainful, but the modern Democratic neurosis gets in the way of a solid case for affection. Without embarrassment, and after a very long journey, I really like this guy. As one of his top campaign officials, himself a convert since the primaries ended, told me recently, this is pure Merle Haggard. It’s not love, but it’s not bad. ■

THOMAS OLIPHANT is a columnist for The Boston Globe.



**Bronze Star Rising:** Kerry before the Senate, 1971

# Climbing the Hill

**As president, John Kerry might find a few surprising allies in a GOP-controlled Congress. And a few is all he'd need to enact some significant changes.**

**BY HAROLD MEYERSON**

SO, WHAT, IF ANYTHING, COULD A PRESIDENT KERRY GET through Congress?

It's beyond question that a President Kerry would inherit a Congress that, for the past half-decade, has been spiraling into an ever deeper dysfunctionality. During the past two years, under the control of the Bush administration and the leadership of Republicans Tom DeLay in the House and Bill Frist in the Senate, many of the hallmarks of legislative democracy—the right to bring bills to the floor, offer amendments, and iron out differences in conference committees—have been suspended. This has happened mainly because the Republican leadership is a bunch of thugs, but also because on a number of key issues, the Democratic position already commands majority support, which George W. Bush and Co. have managed to thwart only through the abuse of their power.

Unless the forthcoming election holds more surprises than anyone has yet imagined—such as a total Democratic landslide or the toppling of the GOP's legislative leaders by their own members—President Kerry would likely take office facing a near-fanatical Republican leadership. And yet, he'd still have an opportunity for significant legislative achievements. Obviously, it would matter hugely which party controls each house. But even in the cheeriest scenarios, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle and Speaker Nancy Pelosi would command no more than small majorities, and, in Daschle's case, far less than the 60 votes required to break a filibuster. And even in the worst scenarios—for it is inconceivable that John Kerry could win without Hill Democrats making some modest gains—many leading congressional Democrats, liberal lobbyists, and Kerry intimates believe that he could still score some real legislative victories.

Clearly, Democratic control of Congress would make a huge difference. "It means you control the hearings, you can set the context of debate, you can reinforce the president's speeches and press conferences," says Massachusetts Representative Ed Markey, whom Kerry has designated as his liaison to Hill Democrats during the campaign. "It ensures that the agenda will be set in a way that puts the Republicans on the defensive. In the first year of an administration, when the president has a clear agenda, it can ensure that a very good percentage of that agenda will be passed."

Even if the Republicans retain a narrow control of

Congress, however, Markey notes that a Kerry presidency would change the dynamics of congressional life. "The veto is a highly civilizing tool for fixing a Republican Congress," Markey observes. "A president can say that if Republican leaders refuse to negotiate with Democratic leaders, he will refuse even to consider dignifying that bill with a signature. You only need one-third in each House to sustain a veto."

The Democrats have no illusion about their Republican colleagues. "The likelihood is that they will be as partisan as they were under [Bill] Clinton," says one senior Democratic Hill staffer. "They'll dig in right away." No matter how Kerry frames the issues, says Illinois Democratic Senator Richard Durbin, "It won't make a difference with Republicans in the House. They'll still want to cut taxes and starve government."

Yet Democrats are genuinely of two minds about Kerry's—and their—capacity to navigate the GOP's minefield. Though all believe that DeLay is DeLay is DeLay, they also believe that a President Kerry would be better able to handle Congress than the last two Democratic presidents, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, who took office as strangers to Capitol Hill. They believe that Democrats in both houses are far more unified today than they were when Clinton took office—indeed, than they've been in many decades. And they believe that the very dynamic of a Kerry victory would shake loose some stray moderate Republicans to vote with the Democrats on issues like drug affordability, more funding for education, and measures to discourage outsourcing of jobs.

"Clinton came in disorganized and was vulnerable from the start to Republican attacks over gays in the military," says one leading congressional Democrat. "He was on the defensive from the very beginning." Kerry, the member continues, is not likely to enter under any such self-imposed handicaps. "He can go over [the Republicans'] heads to the American people." Kerry's congressional intimates also note that the Massachusetts senator is close to several of his Republican colleagues (most famously, Arizona Senator John McCain) and has worked cordially for years with a number of GOP stalwarts. "If a president isn't already a regular," says Durbin, "it takes awhile to bond with members of Congress."

But an even greater difference than the one between Kerry and Clinton is the difference between the congressional Democrats of 2005 and their predecessors in 1993. In the first two years of the Clinton presidency, when Democrats





had sizable majorities in both houses, they could not resolve their differences over Clinton's signature health-insurance proposal, split bitterly over the North American Free Trade Agreement, and lost control of both houses as a result. Today, with their conservative wing greatly reduced by Republican victories in the South and with members of all tendencies marginalized by the DeLay steamroller, congressional Democrats have finally learned the joys of unity.

"It's taken the Democrats 10 years in the minority to figure out it takes discipline and focus to get into the majority," says Bill Samuel, the AFL-CIO's chief lobbyist. Under House Minority Leader Pelosi, who wins acclaim across the House caucus for crafting positions that take account of all wings of the party, House Democrats are voting together more often than in any session since 1960. And such famously divisive issues as trade seem less divisive now, with free trader Kerry and fair trader John Edwards in accord that subsequent agreements need to make labor and environmental standards far more enforceable.

This new unity augurs well for the Kerry agenda. "Vice President Edwards would work closely with the Blue Dogs," says Skip Roberts, chief congressional lobbyist for the Service Employees International Union. "They would be a bloc of support for the administration. So they'd have to pick up just 10 to 15 Republican votes from across the aisle."

Markey concurs with Roberts' head count. "We don't have to turn around more than 10 or 15 votes on a very high percentage of issues that come before us," he says. A number of Democrats point out that they've had these 10 to 15 votes on key issues all throughout the session, but that the Republican leadership has managed to bully members into changing their votes, or has simply ignored these votes when they've gone to conference committees. "We won on Medicare reform; we had a majority for three hours," says Connecticut Representative Rosa DeLauro, referring to the roll call that DeLay kept open one morning from 3 to 6 a.m. until White House blandishments and pressure, abetted by DeLay's enforcers, persuaded a number of Republicans to change their votes.

Democrats have also assembled majorities in favor of extending unemployment benefits, scrapping the Department of Labor's new rules for reducing the number of workers eligible for overtime pay, and enabling Americans to buy drugs at Canadian prices—only to see these votes overturned in conference committees. Some are optimistic that under a President Kerry, no matter who controls Congress, such measures would be enacted. "On environmental issues, or energy,

or health care especially," says Markey, "Kerry will be in a position to pick up 30 to 40 Republican House members who come from districts that expect their members to support the progressive position on those issues."

But are there that many districts fitting that description? Or has partisan-controlled reapportionment reduced such districts to a bare handful? The answer varies issue by issue: It's hard to imagine that any Republican member from a district in the industrial Midwest, for instance, wouldn't feel compelled at least to consider Kerry's proposal for ending tax breaks to companies for outsourcing jobs. On the other hand, says the AFL-CIO's Samuel, "We rarely get [Republican] votes on the budget" and tax issues.



**Feeling Right at Home:** Kerry and his congressional cohorts

DEMOCRATS ARE COUNTING ON A KERRY VICTORY TO UNDERMINE the Republicans' frequently forced solidarity. "If John Kerry brings down the Bush presidency, there will be a lot of second-guessing [about the GOP's hard-right politics] on the Republican side," says DeLauro. Both as a matter of strategy in the current campaign and as a formula for getting bills through Congress, Kerry, Pelosi, and Daschle are all vowing to include Republicans in their work. "You can see what Kerry's thinking by [publicly courting] McCain, by saying he's thinking about bringing Republicans into his administration, by saying he'd govern from the center," says one source close to Kerry. For their part, Pelosi and Daschle have announced that they'd allow minority amendments and bipartisan conference committees should they win their respective houses. "We're going to reach out and not do to them what they've done to us," says California Representative Henry Waxman, updating Kant's categorical imperative for the age of Tom DeLay.

But there's no one-size-fits-all formula for Kerry's legislative agenda. Herewith, then, an issue-by-issue tout sheet

on the John Kerry program—where he could cut deals, and where he should plan to use the issue as a club against Republicans in the 2006 midterm elections:

**Taxes.** With the fall of communism, no issue so energizes and unifies the Republicans as opposition to tax increases. But Kerry is certain never to fall into the trap of proposing to raise taxes in vacuo. Rather, he would present rolling back the tax cut on the wealthiest Americans as the way to fund an expansion of health coverage, the No Child Left Behind program, the continuing presence of U.S. forces in Iraq, and a reduction in the deficit. He could present it, much as Clinton opposed tax cuts, as the way to save the funds for Social Security. And by this tack, he could win the support of Republicans who wish to vote for those programs, along with some ancien régime budget balancers who really do want to cut the deficit.

One piece of leverage that Kerry could have is that a number of Bush's tax cuts expire in 2011. Kerry could thus force even a GOP majority to accept concessions in order to extend some of their pet issues.

**Health Care.** Kerry's health-care plan, his top domestic-policy priority, is crafted in a way that could put pressure on some Republicans to support it. The centerpiece is a proposal to have government pick up the cost of the catastrophically

pro-Democratic voting patterns, nothing would do more to enhance the party's long-term prospects than to enable unions to grow again. Partisans are optimistic it could pass the House under Kerry, but agree with Durbin that "it would be a hard thing to get 60 votes for [it] in the Senate" unless the number of Democratic senators rises into the mid-50s.

**Trade.** The news here is the emergence of a near consensus on the Democratic side. Now that Bush's trade representative, Robert Zoellick, has negotiated the Central America Free Trade Agreement, which dismisses labor and environmental standards as secondary concerns, a President Kerry could well send it back to stiffen its provisions. In a Kerry presidency, trade wars seem more likely to occur between the two parties than among the Democrats.

**Energy.** Increasing renewable energy and conservation has long been a cause that John Kerry has fought for. Markey says Kerry would be "respectful" to the fossil-fuel agenda (which, says Miller, doesn't mean a tax break for oil companies making \$40 a barrel), but only if the overall bill shifts national policy toward renewables. "He'll put a lot of chips on that agenda," says Markey. Democratic solidarity hasn't really been tested on this one.

**Homeland Security.** Kerry would want more money for first responders, port security, and the like. Kerry would get it.

## Many Democrats believe that Kerry would be better able to handle Congress than the last two Democratic presidents, who took office as strangers to Capitol Hill.

and chronically—and expensively—sick, thereby taking a major cost burden off employers. "This has a lot of appeal in the business community, whose health costs are soaring and who could push Republicans to move in this direction," says Waxman. Others think that giving the government the power to negotiate drug prices would be hard for Republicans with large numbers of seniors in their districts to oppose. Durbin adds that AARP CEO Bill Novelli, who backed Bush's unpopular Medicare changes, "is doing everything he can think of to win back his reputation on Capitol Hill, so he'd be eager" to help Kerry reduce drug costs.

**Education.** "[Massachusetts Senator Ted] Kennedy will move to see that No Child Left Behind is fully funded," says one source close to both Kennedy and Kerry. "That will happen."

**Jobs and Income.** "We want to assist American manufacturing and curtail outsourcing," says DeLauro, who chairs the subcommittee drafting the platform at this summer's Democratic convention. Kerry's proposal to change the tax code to that end would likely win some Republican support. Other tax-code changes to create jobs in clean energy, retrofitting, and the like would probably be a harder sell to GOPers.

Labor is encouraged that California Representative George Miller's Employee Free Choice Act—enabling workers to form unions by signing cards rather than endure coercive anti-union campaigns from management—currently has 204 co-sponsors in the House, including seven Republicans, and Kerry's backing as well. Given union members'

**Iraq.** Irony of ironies, Kerry "would get more support than Bush for the same appropriation request," says one senior congressional Democratic staffer.

**Judges.** "My guess is that a President Kerry will do one thing George Bush has never done: sit down and work with Democrats and Republicans" on judicial appointments, says People for the American Way's Ralph Neas. A president needs 60 senators to approve a judge, and Kerry would have to deal—not with the Republican leadership but with moderates like Lincoln Chaffee and Olympia Snowe, and such institutional (meaning they care about preserving the Senate) rather than movement (meaning they care only about building the right) conservatives as Dick Lugar, Chuck Hagel, and Pete Domenici. Kerry, says Durbin, would probably need to appoint some moderate Republicans early on to be able to appoint mainstream Democrats without incurring unbeatable filibusters.

Of course, if the Republicans are unmovable on judges or anything else, Kerry could always do in the 2006 midterm elections what Harry Truman did in the campaign of 1948: Send the Congress a slew of popular measures that the GOP would never pass, then run against the Republican "do-nothing Congress."

Remember, the Republicans have spent much of the past two years using their control of Congress to *avoid* having to vote. On their worst days, a President Kerry and his Democratic cohorts should compel Republicans to be Republicans. If John Kerry is suitably adept, Tom DeLay won't be the GOP's secret weapon; he'll be the Democrats'. ■





# The Power of the Pen

The not-so-secret weapon of Congress-wary presidents: the executive order.

BY CLAY RISEN

Sure, the Democrats could hit the jackpot this year and take the White House and both chambers of Congress. But if John Kerry wins, he could just as easily be facing a Republican-controlled Congress that's, well, not eager to cooperate. Luckily, his hands

wouldn't be tied. He'd still have the executive order to help promote his agenda. In fact, on issues from the environment to labor to abortion, Kerry would likely resort to unilateral action rather than try to wrangle a bill through Congress. Acting through executive orders would allow him to take decisive stands and to set the terms of a policy debate. Indeed, given the chances of an oppositional Congress and the fact that he would be replacing a Republican, Kerry would probably use the executive order even more often than Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush did. But before doing so, he would need to take a good look at his recent predecessors, because while they have all used the executive order to define their agendas, they have also found that pushing too far has painful political consequences.

IN THE MODERN ERA, EXECUTIVE ORDERS HAVE GONE FROM being a tool largely reserved for internal White House operations—deciding how to format agency budgets or creating outlines for diplomatic protocol—to a powerful weapon in defining, and expanding, executive power. In turn, presidents have increasingly used that power to construct and promote social policies on some of the country's most controversial issues, from civil rights to labor relations to reproductive health.

The executive order is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution; rather, it derives from the document's requirement that the president enforce federal laws—that he “shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed”—and carry out his various constitutional duties, such as overseeing the military and conducting foreign relations. “Presidents have issued executive orders from the earliest days of the republic,” notes political scientist Kenneth Mayer in his 2001 book, *With the Stroke of a Pen: Executive Orders and Presidential Power*, “but there has never been a uniform style.”

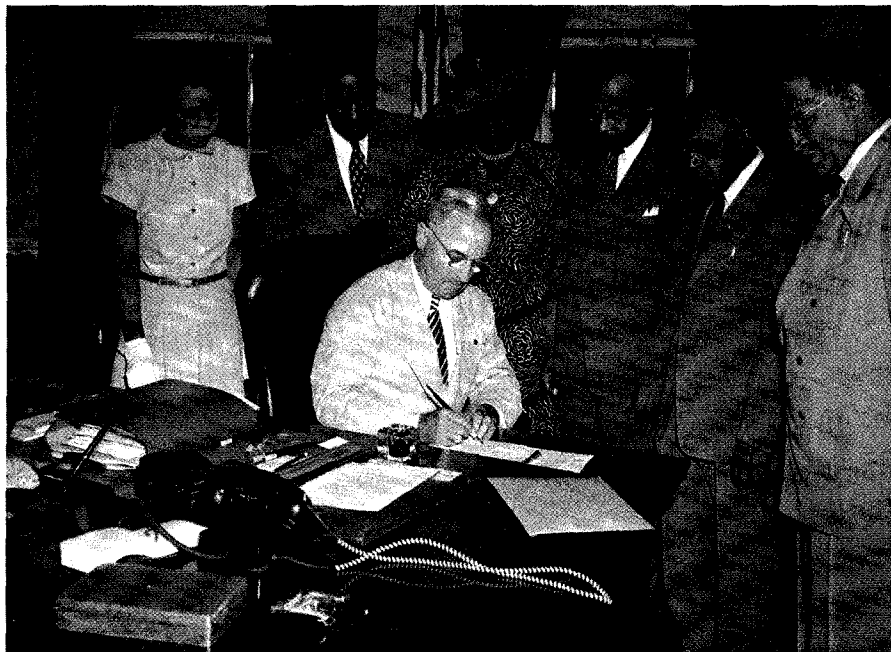
Executive orders weren't systematically recorded until the 1920s, and the numbering system instituted in 1907 extends, retroactively, only to the Lincoln administration. (Executive Order 1, issued on April 15, 1961, established mil-

itary courts in Louisiana.) What's more, many actions characterized as executive orders are actually presidential memoranda, directives, and proclamations, similar in use but legally distinct tools. (Ronald Reagan's so-called Mexico City policy, which blocked federal funds for international aid groups that provide abortion counseling, is one such memorandum often mischaracterized as an executive order.) But while the definition is vague and the limits are murky, the exercise of an executive order is pretty straightforward: The president can order an executive branch agency to do anything he wants, as long as he can cite a law or the Constitution to support his action.

Taken as a whole, executive orders are pretty mundane. Even today, they usually amount to little more than bureaucratic fine-tuning—an order issued by Bush on April 30, for example, streamlined the process for building border-crossing stations. But they have also been used by presidents to effect dramatic change. In 1948, frustrated with his efforts to get civil-rights legislation moving in Congress, Harry Truman used the executive order to desegregate the military. In 1994, after Congress refused to bail out the Mexican economy, Clinton invoked his power under the Exchange Stabilization Fund, a Depression-era mechanism allowing the president to defend the dollar abroad, to provide \$20 billion in loan guarantees. The most famous executive order may be the Emancipation Proclamation, which drew on Abraham Lincoln's power as commander in chief to free slaves held in Confederate states. “It was quite clearly the most expansive use of the executive order power ever,” says Walter Dellinger, a Duke University law professor and a Clinton assistant attorney general. Presidents have deployed executive orders for less admirable reasons as well, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's decision to intern Japanese Americans during World War II being perhaps the most egregious example.

In very rough terms, the modern use of executive orders has gone through two phases—the first to expand the president's power, the second to exercise that power. Before the

turn of the century, the president was weak relative to the Congress, and he had only partial control over the executive-branch agencies (the rest were largely autonomous, setting their own agendas and submitting their own budgets to Congress). But during the first two decades of the 20th century, as Mayer writes, the expansion of the federal government put pressure on Congress to centralize authority over the budget, and several presidents—William Howard Taft, in particular—pushed for that control to reside in the White House. “In my opinion,” Taft wrote in 1912, “it is entirely competent for the president to submit a budget, and Congress cannot prevent it.” Congress initially opposed the idea—Edward Fitzpatrick, a congressional staffer who authored a report on executive budget proposals in 1918, called it a move toward a “Prussian” military state—but eventu-



**Mightier Than the Sword:** Harry Truman used the power of his office to promote his civil rights agenda.

ally caved by passing the 1921 Budget and Accounting Act, allowing the president to set the budgets for executive agencies. As constitutional scholar James L. Sundquist noted in his book *The Decline and Resurgence of Congress*, “[T]he modern presidency ... began on June 10, 1921, the day that President [Warren] Harding signed the Budget and Accounting Act.”

A similar series of events occurred during the late 1930s, when Roosevelt pushed Congress to give him more authority over the proliferation of government agencies of the New Deal. Congress had intended for Roosevelt to merely streamline operations, but he used it to expand his powers rapidly during the war—powers, such as control over foreign aid, labor relations, and intelligence, that remained with the president long after the fighting stopped.

The second phase of executive-order usage began after World War II, when presidents used them to exercise their newly expanded powers. In foreign affairs, the expanded executive pursued Cold War operations, from foreign aid to intelligence gathering to military operations. But executive orders were also deployed on the home front to initiate so-

cial change in the face of congressional and public opposition, most notably on civil rights. In 1941, after meeting extensively with civil-rights leaders, Roosevelt used the executive order to create the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC), forbidding discrimination by federal contractors. The FEPC proved ineffective, but it gave notice to Congress and the public that civil rights was on the president’s agenda and that he was willing to act alone to improve them.

Following the war, Truman lined up a series of executive orders to promote his civil-rights agenda, including military desegregation and a restructured FEPC. As Sherie Merson and Steven Schlossman note in their book, *Foxholes and Color Lines*, “[Truman’s] intervention emboldened advocates of racial equality, put supporters of segregation on the defensive, and opened a path leading toward the completion of formal racial integration.” John F. Kennedy used the executive order to establish the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, and Lyndon Johnson initiated affirmative action with an order to federal contractors regarding hiring practices. As Mayer noted, “The executive order became a powerful symbol of presidential commitment to racial equality,” galvanizing a movement that went on to force change at all levels of society.

There are legal and political limits to how a president can deploy executive orders—through the courts, the Congress, and the public. In 1952, Truman invoked his powers as commander in chief to seize the nation’s steel mills when workers threatened to strike (he claimed a strike would hinder his ability to prosecute the Korean War). But in its landmark *Youngstown* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that Truman had overstepped his authority. The courts also ruled against Clinton’s order preventing federal contractors from hiring permanent replacements for striking workers, and, this June, against Bush’s policy regarding Guantanamo Bay prisoners. This has happened only infrequently, but the mere possibility of a negative ruling makes presidents think twice about using executive orders too loosely.

Congress provides an additional, if somewhat less effective, check on executive orders. In theory, any executive order can be later annulled by Congress. But in the last 34 years, during which presidents have issued some 1,400 orders, it has defeated just three. More often, Congress will counter executive orders by indirect means, holding up nominations or bills until the president relents. “There’s always the potential that a Congress angry about one issue will respond by limiting other things you want,” says Mayer.

The most effective check on executive orders has proven to be political. When it comes to executive orders, “The president is much more clearly responsible,” says Dellinger, who was heavily involved in crafting orders under Clinton. “Not only is there no involvement from Congress, but the presi-



dent has to personally sign the order.” Clinton’s Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument executive order may have helped him win votes, but it also set off a massive congressional and public backlash. Right-wing Internet sites bristled with comments about “dictatorial powers,” and Republicans warned of an end to civil liberties as we know them. “President Clinton is running roughshod over our Constitution,” said then–House Majority Leader Dick Armey.

Indeed, an unpopular executive order can have immediate—and lasting—political consequences. In 2001, for example, Bush proposed raising the acceptable number of parts per billion of arsenic in drinking water. It was a bone he was trying to toss to the mining industry, and it would have overturned Clinton’s order lowering the levels. But the overwhelmingly negative public reaction forced Bush to quickly withdraw his proposal—and it painted him indelibly as an anti-environmental president.

WHAT KINDS OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS COULD BE EXPECTED from a Kerry administration? The most obvious, says Mayer, would be a series of orders in early 2005 that address Bush’s more political unilateral actions, especially given the unlikelihood of a Democratic congressional sweep. “I would expect Kerry in the first few months of his administration to

reopened federal coffers to dozens of international aid groups, it cemented Clinton’s abortion-rights reputation as well. Bush, on the 29th anniversary of *Roe*, evoked that day’s symbolism to the opposite effect, revoking Clinton’s memo and sending the signal that he was willing to use executive power to curtail abortion rights. And in the ping-pong game that Mexico City has become, Kerry could very well reverse its direction again.

Kerry would likely act on stem-cell research as well. Bush’s August 2001 executive order limiting research to 78 existing stem-cell lines has been attacked by both Democrats and Republicans as an overly restrictive, arbitrary policy—and a sop to the religious right—and Kerry himself has called on Bush to relax the policy. “If we pursue the limitless potential of our science, and trust that we can use it wisely, we will save millions of lives and earn the gratitude of future generations,” he said recently. Because the issue is so politically charged, Kerry would likely find it easier to act alone than try to push a bill through Congress—perhaps by replacing Bush’s order with one allowing unlimited research, coupled with a ban on human cloning and a patient-approval requirement.

Observers also expect significant action on foreign policy. Beyond using the executive order to respond to international crises, Kerry would likely use it to correct some of Bush’s

## **Many of Bush’s most egregious policy moves have been enacted through executive order, so it’s a good bet that Kerry, if elected, would rescind them in kind.**

make a series of symbolic and substantive gestures reversing what Bush has done,” he says. “I would expect it to be a busy time.” After all, many of Bush’s most egregious policy moves—creating the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, limits on access to presidential papers—have been enacted through executive order, so it’s a good bet that Kerry would reinforce his base by rescinding them in kind during the early days of his administration.

Organized labor has been infuriated by Bush’s willingness to use the executive order to cut into gains made under Clinton. One of Bush’s first orders, for example, dissolved the National Partnership Council, which Clinton had established in 1993 as a way to give labor leaders more influence in federal contracting issues. So it’s likely that Kerry’s transition team would prepare labor-friendly orders. Indeed, like the environment—and, a half-century ago, civil rights—labor has become an area in which the president is expected to act by executive order, largely because, as a hotly partisan issue, it’s almost impossible to do anything substantive through legislative means. Kerry could re-establish the NPC; he could also issue an order establishing specific and permanent labor standards for future trade agreements. (Clinton issued a similar order, regarding environmental standards, in 1999.)

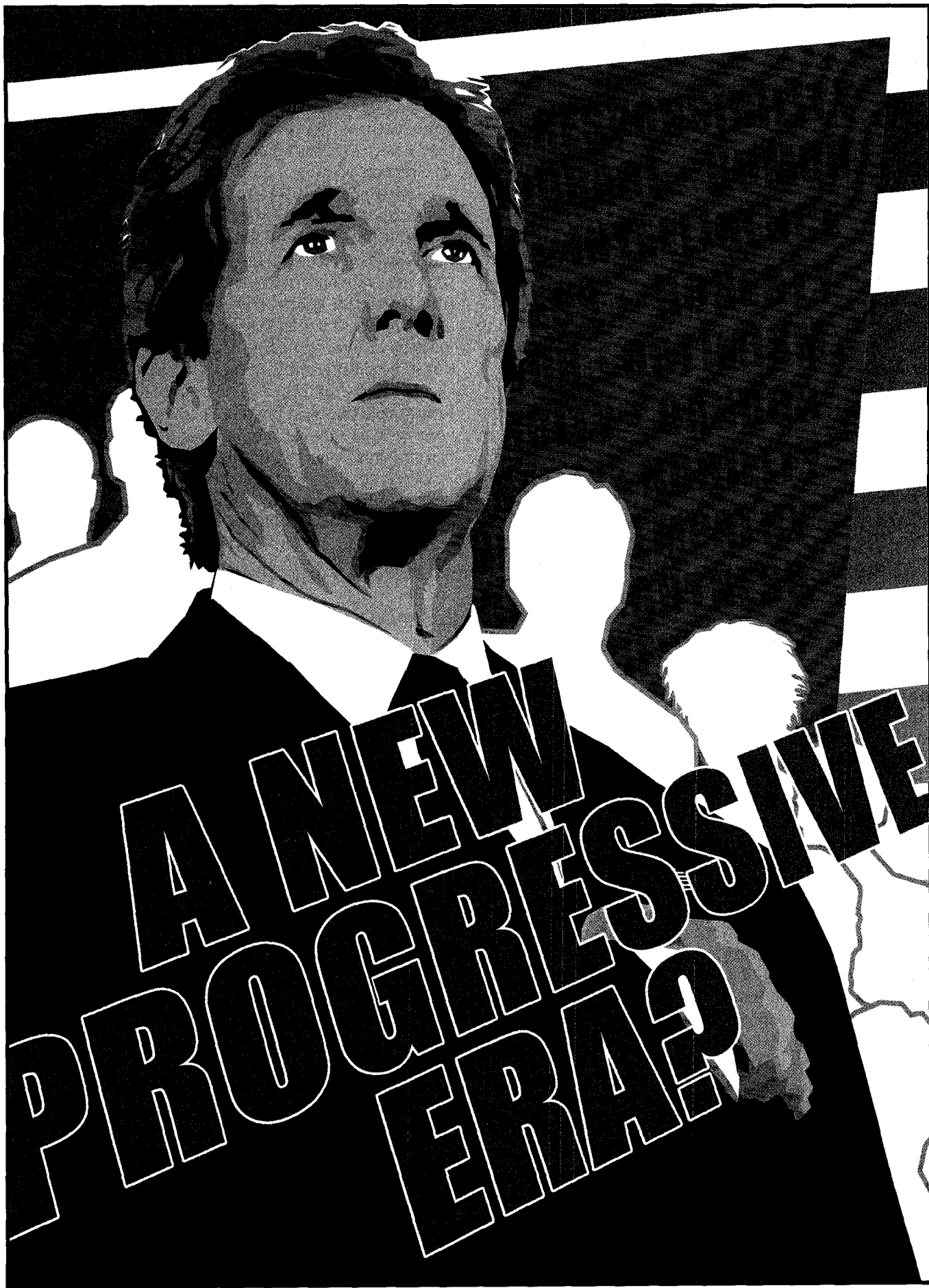
Abortion is another area in which Kerry would likely act unilaterally. Just two days after his inauguration on January 20, Clinton used the 21st anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* to announce a memorandum repealing Reagan’s Mexico City policy. The move carried both practical and symbolic weight: It not only

more egregious missteps—such as the administration’s desire to circumvent the Geneva Conventions. “I would expect, making conditional forecasts, that there will be new policies on detainees and a renouncing of the earlier positions regarding the application of the Geneva Conventions,” says Mayer. This could be as simple as a proclamation reaffirming a blanket commitment to the conventions, or something more robust, such as stronger safeguards against the use of torture.

Finally, there would likely be a grab bag of orders aimed at swing voters, securing their votes for the next election. When Clinton came into office, according to Dellinger, there were several people on the transition team tasked with drawing up good-government orders to attract Ross Perot voters. It’s a good bet that veterans would likely benefit from quick executive action under Kerry. Should John Edwards succeed in pulling in a number of southern voters, expect to see similar action on rural issues such as support for small-business manufacturing.

But don’t expect Kerry to push the executive order too far. He probably wouldn’t take any drastic steps on hot-button issues like Iraq or taxes. If he’s learned anything from his predecessors, he’d use executive orders strategically, deploying them to address specific interest groups and to reverse obviously unpopular Bush policies. Of course, it’s ultimately hard to say exactly where Kerry would use executive orders. But if recent history is any guide, however he uses them, they will likely define his presidency. ■

CLAY RISEN is an assistant editor at The New Republic.







## Organizer in Chief

Great presidents are great movement builders.

What do you do if you've just been elected president and you lack a working majority in Congress?

A lot, actually. Our most effective presidents have moved not just legislation but public opinion. Eventually, they moved Congress—because they had influenced public perceptions and values first. And that's not all.

Presidents also have enormous executive power (see Clay Risen, "The Power of the Pen," page 27). John F. Kennedy famously abolished segregation in interstate public transportation "with the stroke of a pen." Harry Truman, likewise, desegregated the armed forces. Conversely, much of the mischief perpetrated by Presidents Reagan and Bush, *père* and *fils*, to weaken regulation in the public interest, has been done administratively.

Recent Republican presidents, most notably Ronald Reagan, have used their office to inspire their base, build their movement, and advance their ideology. Reagan gave comfort to the religious right, to the gun lobby, to the anti-abortion activists. He and the Bushes also steered federal dollars their way, through "faith-based" social-service initiatives, abstinence-only sex education, marriage-education programs, and other policies. The Reagan administration very explicitly "defunded the left" by blackballing liberal grantees. Under George W. Bush, that blacklist was expanded to include mainstream environmental scientists, biologists who refused to genuflect to Bush's bizarre theology on stem-cell research, and countless other opponents of Bush's brand of junk science. A new president can not only restore objectivity to the funding of science but can remind voters of how it has been dangerously politicized by the ideological right.

Presidents can teach. A President Kerry could remind Americans that the "liberty and justice for all" that we ritually invoke is not, in fact, God-given, but is a function of whether our government safeguards or tramples due process and civil liberty. In reforming the USA PATRIOT Act and in restoring due process to immigrants, the new president could infuse abstract conceptions of the land of the free with practical meaning that is politically safeguarded in the hearts of the citizenry. John Kerry, recalling Martin Luther King Jr., could reclaim religion as a force that teaches social justice as well as private piety. And he could remind voters why separation of church and state exists: not to

discourage faith but to protect the private right of worship from zealots wielding state power.

Presidents can choose whom to lionize. Reagan, in the 1980 campaign, disingenuously told an audience of tax-exempt and presumably nonpartisan conservative preachers, "You can't support me, but I can support you." He associated himself with ultra-right groups and thereby made them seem more respectable and mainstream. Effective presidents have also been great party builders, energizing their institutional base as well as their ideological ones.

The most effective Democrats have helped build progressive movements that eventually swelled their electoral constituency, and they did it despite the legislative limits of the moment. Franklin Delano Roosevelt could not muster the votes to end segregation, but blacks knew he was a true friend. Likewise gays with Bill Clinton, despite legislative failures and even travesties that Clinton signed, like the Defense of Marriage Act. Roosevelt never quite said in so many words that he wanted American workers to sign union cards, but his close alliance with the burgeoning labor movement allowed John L. Lewis, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, to declare, with only slight poetic license, "President Roosevelt wants you to join the union." Lyndon Johnson took enormous political risks to end the stain of official racism and to lead the broad citizenry to appreciate the national disgrace of extensive poverty. Johnson was also a good enough politician to deliver benefits to the broad middle class through programs such as Medicare and federal college aid. But for Vietnam, the coalition might have swelled and solidified. Great presidents expand not just the agenda but the national sense of possibility—and the polity itself.

Progressive magazines often publish manifestos of long-deferred policy goals—national health insurance! universal child care!—that stand little chance of near-term enactment. Or, conversely, they decide to be hyperrealists, move to the ostensible center of a shrunken polity, and settle for pitiful token gains that inspire even more mass passivity.

This year, we are commending a different brand of realism, drawing on lessons from the history of the presidency. A chief executive has a lot of latent power to build for the long term by using his influence to inspire broad changes in public values, to help build a progressive movement that in turn will help him move Congress. We asked scholars and activists associated with a broad range of public issues to join us in thinking about how John Kerry, if elected, might help energize a progressive movement for the long term. Their advice gives us a lot of hope.

—The Editors

## Teachable Moments

Every week, celebrate a public hero.

BY ROBERT KUTTNER

ONE OF THE EMBLEMATIC MOVEMENTS OF THE 1990S WAS an ideologically ambiguous crusade called "Reinventing Government." It took its name from a surprise best-seller by

David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. The idea was that we still need government, but we need it to be leaner, more flexible, more adaptive—a more customer-driven government that "steers more and rows less."

This clever mantra had particular appeal for New Democrats, and it was ready-made for Bill Clinton. Reinventing Government allowed moderates to embrace public purpose, but also to posture as modern and market-like (like the conservatives) and oppose the straw man of big,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROB KELLY

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bad, bureaucratic “command-and-control” government. The reinventors of government could be for deregulation and privatization, and even be part of the chorus of catcalls against the caricatured Democratic past, yet feel they were not abetting the cruder movement to destroy government. They were merely bringing it up to date.

The impulse was noble, but the execution badly flawed. Under Clinton, the word was made flesh through a program unfortunately named the National Performance Review. This initiative, directed by Vice President Al Gore, set about assessing government agencies and making recommendations to improve them. It represented, at first, a real opportunity to restore popular faith in the idea of government in the course of streamlining it. But to the extent that Reinventing Government did get attention, the glory went to the budget savings, not the need to reclaim public institutions and functions. Ignoring Daniel Burnham’s famous exhortation, it was a story of making small plans.

What of John Kerry? He has one of the most liberal voting records in the Senate, and he is no government basher. He did not join several “pro-business” Democrats in their effort to cripple the Securities and Exchange Commission to win plaudits on Wall Street and in Silicon Valley. His record on tough environmental regulation is exemplary. But Kerry has sometimes imbibed this same conventional wisdom about the need to disparage government.

In the 2000 election, when Kerry had a close Senate race, I was on a panel with him at a gathering of suburban Democratic town committees. A questioner asked about deregulation. “Nobody wants more regulations,” Kerry began. When he finished, I said, “Excuse me, Senator, I want more regulations,” and I mentioned corporate excesses such as drug-company price gouging that were crying out for more public remediation, not less. Kerry quickly explained that he meant he was opposed to regulations in the sense of red tape. But this was a good illustration of the seductiveness of this fashion, and the tendency it creates for Democrats to do the Republicans’ ideological work for them.

In retrospect, if ever a decade cried out for more government, it was the 1990s. The bipartisan deregulation—of airlines, banks, stock brokerage, accounting, hospital pricing, electricity, broadcasting, etc.—that began in the late ’70s came home to roost by the late ’90s. In every case, deregulation overreached. The Wall Street scandals were fruits of the dismantling of the Glass-Steagall Act, which once prohibited conflicts of interest by commercial banks. Enron was a witches’ brew that drew on both electricity deregulation and financial deregulation. Even greater competition among airlines, which promised consumer benefits, partly faltered because weakened antitrust police let big carriers manipulate fares and gobble up little ones.

If one consequence of the extreme anti-government mood was to cripple government’s regulatory functions, another was to undermine its equalizing role—weaker minimum wages, weaker protection of the right to unionize, smaller social transfers. And the extreme fiscal squeeze, caused by more

government bashing, made it seemingly impossible to address new needs that could be solved only by government, such as universal health coverage, or high-quality, universal pre-kindergarten and child care.

In many respects, the extremism of George W. Bush following the moderation of Bill Clinton was a repeat of the extremism of Ronald Reagan following the cautious centrism of Jimmy Carter. Both Democratic presidents, by insisting that they were only limited partisans of government, softened the ground for their successors. Both Democrats were ideologically on the defensive, while their Republican counterparts were ideologically on the march.

What should a President Kerry do? He should not let a week go by without celebrating a public hero, and not just the firefighters and the veterans. The civil servant at the Food and Drug Administration who fights drug-industry pressure and keeps a harmful drug off the market is a public hero. So is the SEC auditor who busts a corporate thief so a million people don’t lose their pensions, and the Environmental Protection Agency scientist who safeguards our water from some scofflaw mogul. Lionizing these public

servants is a broader reminder of why capitalism perennially needs to be housebroken. Surely it’s not anti-business to demand fair dealing that protects ordinary investors, workers, and consumers. Surely this is not an outmoded, “Depression-era” conceit that markets now solve on their own. When the next Enron occurs, which it will, Kerry should use the moment to teach some broader lessons. He should publicize not just the public heroes but the private scoundrels, and the need for public

regulation that they imply.

It’s been a long time since a progressive president invested some of his political capital to remind Americans why we need government. It’s an investment that will pay legislative dividends in public support for the particular initiatives Kerry champions. Imagine a time, again, when the right finds that it’s bad politics to bash government because citizens actually appreciate what only government can do. Kerry could make that happen. ■

**An FDA official, an  
SEC auditor, and an  
EPA scientist—all are  
public servants who  
deserve public praise.**

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## **From Bush’s Playbook**

Vision, leadership, and structural change

**BY JAN SCHAKOWSKY**

GIVEN HIS LACK OF MANDATE, ONE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED moderation and caution from George W. Bush. Instead, Bush moved aggressively to reframe the basic dialogue of American politics and restructure the institutions of American government.

What has Bush to teach John Kerry? Bush adhered consistently to three core principles:

**1. Vision.** Unlike his father, this Bush had no problem



with the “vision thing.” He has been resolute in projecting a vision of America. His economic agenda was simple and consistent: The economy grows if you give more wealth to the wealthy; the private sector is always better than the public sector. His international agenda was driven by the neoconservative belief in American exceptionalism, from which follows unilateralism, preemption, unchallengeable U.S. power, and unwillingness to abide by international laws, agreements, and institutions.

**2. Structural Change.** The Bush team set out to alter fundamental relations of power. It systematically moved to weaken and marginalize organized labor, and to strengthen the religious right. It shifted control of trillions of dollars through tax cuts to the richest 1 percent of Americans, while simultaneously starving the public sector. It eliminated offices such as the White House Office for Women’s Initiatives and Outreach and created new ones like the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. It privatized, outsourced and block-granted—moves all intended to limit the federal government. Its Federal Communications Commission promoted media concentration. It sought to pack the federal bench with likeminded, ideologically driven judges.

**3. Feed the Base, Position the Elite.** Bush nurtured his hungry right-wing, fundamentalist base, as well as his well-fed corporate base. His strategists systematically placed ideologues in key positions, from cabinet secretaries on down. They reviewed everything from global policies to scientific grant proposals for ideological correctness. They identified and nurtured supporters, including campus leaders, talk-show hosts, local politicians, and businesspeople.

Each move was planned and choreographed years in advance, by deliberate ideologues who knew how they wanted to change the world and were prepared to act.

ANTICIPATING A VICTORY FOR JOHN KERRY, WE MUST BE ready to act. While George W. Bush’s principles are abhorrent, his seriousness about politics is instructive.

**1. Vision.** The new administration needs a clear vision for America. The progressive economic vision begins with the premise that the economy is driven from the bottom up, not the top down. For example, Kerry should move decisively to propose a comprehensive and fair tax reform that both puts money in the pockets of people who will actually spend it and stops rewarding corporations for moving their headquarters to a mailbox in Bermuda.

Kerry should describe a clear internationalist vision that has the United States taking the lead in strengthening in-

stitutions like the United Nations and defining a worldwide ethic for civilized nations in the 21st century. This ethic should preclude nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, human-rights abuses, genocide, the subjugation of women, and political and religious oppression. Kerry must address the most critical destabilizing global reality: the fact that the United States and other Western nations are, relatively speaking, islands of wealth surrounded by a sea of poverty. For a fraction of the cost of the Iraq War, the United States could lead the world in reducing the brutalizing disparities that leave millions of people living in conditions ripe for the recruitment of terrorists and suicide bombers.

**2. Structural Change.** Nothing is more important in creating a progressive, democratic society than broadening the percentage of the workforce organized into unions, beginning with labor-law reform (likewise immigration reform, appointing judges that respect the constitutional rights of all Americans, pension reform, prohibiting concentration of the media, universal health care, and rebuilding public education). The goal is not just to enact progressive policies but to fundamentally change the relations of power in America. Promoting and passing these structural initiatives will put progressive facts on the ground—facts that, once in place, will be just as hard to change as Social Security and Medicare. And the battles for these causes will restore confidence in government and empower progressive advocacy groups that are constituencies



for enduring progressive change.

**3. Leadership and Base.** Kerry shouldn’t just replace conservative ideologues with progressive ones; he should also open the doors and windows, end the oppressive secrecy that has characterized the Bush administration, and encourage broad participation in the political process. The difference between the Bush base and the Kerry base is that Kerry’s is, in fact, the majority of Americans, ordinary people who are worse off today than they were four years ago. While Bush feeds red meat to his “cultural” base mostly by way of fundamentalist rhetoric, he only truly delivered the goods to a handful of the most privileged Americans. The “emerging Democratic majority” described by John B. Judis and Ruy Teixeira—a more diverse and cosmopolitan America—is ill-served by the Bush agenda. By actually delivering for our base, not just feeding it empty words, Kerry will be delivering for a majority that will continue to grow in numbers and in power. Beyond delivering for the base, he must engage the base in the struggle—and form the grass-roots army that

has begun to mobilize this election year in a continuing campaign to enact a progressive agenda.

When Kerry is elected, some will say that Bush's firm adherence to principles led to the incumbent's defeat, that progressives need a cautious approach to change. But Bush has failed, not because of the way he pursued his vision, but because the vision itself is flawed. If progressives move forward with optimism and self-confidence, using our principles to address the aspirations of the vast majority of Americans, we will consolidate a progressive base for the next generation. ■

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## The Courage to Lead

A resurgent movement awaits its organizer in chief.

BY JAMES MACGREGOR BURNS

AS PRESIDENT, JOHN KERRY WOULD INHERIT THE MOST formidable grass-roots force in recent American history. Born in the rising populism of last year's frenetic primaries, this force has generated its own cobblestone leadership. What will Kerry do with these exuberant leaders dispersed across country and city? What will they do with *him*?

To hold this vibrant force, he must plan for the long run—if Kerry hopes to put through his legislative program, to win the midterm congressional elections of 2006, and to carry the Democratic Party to victory in 2008. But maintaining his personal following will not in itself be enough to sustain his strong personal leadership. In too many presidential campaigns, the candidate assembles an ad hoc team that fails to strengthen the institutional Democratic Party. Kerry must merge his campaign volunteers and professionals with the rank and file and ongoing organization of the Democratic Party.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt tried to build a reorganized and revitalized democracy, but he failed in the face of entrenched southern power and the distractions of impending world war. To complete this giant task, Kerry would need to be more than a broker. He must rise above the usual give-and-take interest-group liberalism of the Democratic Party. The checks and balances of the American constitutional system, the regional fragmentation of the polity, and our relatively weak parties require an effective president to be a skilled broker and transactional leader. But that brand of brokerage, by itself, will not overcome the systemic bias against progressive action—it never has. Like other great leaders, President Kerry must first provide transforming ideas attuned to the great liberal proclamations, from the Declaration of Independence to the "Four Freedoms."

Oratory will not be enough in itself, though. President Kerry must offer leadership of the highest order—creative, comprehensive, continuing. After years of delayed business under Democratic as well as Republican presidents, there

must be outcomes, products, real change. These are what the great force Kerry has mobilized will want and can crucially help supply. As an organization Democrat, I have worked with grass-roots people for decades, but I have never seen such a mobilization of the liberal potential—independents as well as turned-off Democrats and an amazing number of disenchanted Republicans—as I have seen over the last 12 months. These are mainly policy-minded people dedicated to action, results, real change.

So if this resurgent force has much to offer Kerry, he would have even more to offer it. Its members will want a committed and constant leadership to complete the unfulfilled promise of the Carter and Clinton presidencies. The activists have waited a long time. They know that another spasm of reform—another Hundred Days—will not be enough. Nor will a strategy of centrism. President Kerry must offer strong and continuous leadership, year after year, to finally come to grips with the long list of delayed and inadequate programs for health, environment, minimum wages, jobs, and—above all—the relief of poverty at home and abroad. Catching up on unfinished business will take more than a year or two, or a presidential term. It might take a decade or two—the work of the Greatest Generation yet.

There is an even more crucial demand that this rising force would make of a President Kerry: not to forsake reform and programs for war making. Opponents of Iraq would hope that in this campaign, perhaps with George W. Bush by his side, John Kerry would turn to his television audience, look its members in the eye, and promise, "I will never—never—lie the American people into an unnecessary war." ■

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JAMES MACGREGOR BURNS, co-author of *George Washington* and author of the Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom*, is a professor of government, emeritus, at Williams College.

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## We the Government

Repairing the rift between citizen and state

BY DEBORAH TANNEN

WHEN WE RECALL THE NOW-FAMOUS INCANTATION, "ASK not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country," we focus on its content: John F. Kennedy invited Americans to become active participants in, rather than passive recipients of, American democracy. But the word that stands out for me is the personal pronoun "your." How different JFK's message would have been had he exhorted Americans to ask what they can do for "the" country. In the word "your" resides the personal connection between citizens and nation that has broken down, replaced by an adversarial stance of citizens toward their government.

Presidential historian Robert Dallek cites a comment someone made to Eleanor Roosevelt after FDR's death: "I miss the way your husband used to speak to me about my



government." Here, too, the personal pronouns leaped out at me: "my" government, hearing him speak "to me." In their eagerness to turn voters against the party of Roosevelt and Kennedy—the party that gave Americans services such as Social Security and Medicare that the other party now claims to protect while clandestinely striving to erode—Republicans have defined a new enemy: "the government." The sense of unity that followed the September 11 attacks by a literal enemy has been dissolved as Republicans encourage Americans to see their own government as a metaphorical enemy. Like an autoimmune disease, this metaphoric battle turns the body politic's protective forces against the body itself.

Rather than regarding the government as ours—a source of services that better citizens' lives—many Americans now see the services the government provides as their due, while regarding the government that provides those services as an enemy force. The illogic of this stance was eloquently expressed in Bill Clinton's remarks on the 30th anniversary of Medicare in 1995: "We had people all over America coming up to me, or the first lady, or to Senator [Ted] Kennedy, saying, 'Don't let the government mess with my Medicare.'" Again, the parts of speech tell all: The personal "my" ("my Medicare") reveals the closeness these speakers feel toward the service the government provides, while the impersonal "the" ("the government") evinces how distant, disconnected, and distrustful they feel toward the source of that treasured service.

How could John Kerry as president repair this internal rift and restore a sense of connection between citizens and their government? One way is to attend to the smallest parts of speech. He should refer to himself as "your president" and talk of "your" government or "ours." He must avoid the temptation to leap on the bandwagon that Republicans have built by claiming that he, too, will get government off your backs. It's an easy way to hitch a ride, but it undermines Democratic leaders' ability to get the credit their party deserves for having created the programs voters now see as part of the landscape, and to garner citizen support for future programs.

Effective presidents have embraced new communications technologies. Roosevelt's fireside chats made brilliant use of radio, a technology that brought the public voice of a political leader into people's homes, the most private of spaces. With television, not only a voice but a physical persona enters the home, sits down to dinner, becomes a member of the family. Ronald Reagan exploited these aspects of TV to become a "great communicator." He was not a great orator, nor was he great at communicating information. But he was superb at communicating the illusion that he was speaking directly to each listener—"to me." Ironically, he used this skill to avoid communicating, in the sense of addressing an issue. With his famous "there you go again" quip, he sidestepped the substance of Jimmy Carter's criticism. The good-natured image became the substance of what Reagan communicated.

**People often speak  
of "my" Medicare;  
they should also be  
taught to refer to  
"our" government.**

Kerry and other candidates have exploited Internet technology for fund raising; organizations such as MoveOn.org use the Web to create communities of physically distant but likeminded individuals. When Kerry announced his vice-presidential choice in e-mails to his core supporters, he made them feel included, part of his community.

The Internet likewise can be used to restore bonds between citizens and their government. E-mail offers perhaps the most intimate connection of any technology. Many people who would never talk about personal matters face to face are able to do so in e-mail or instant messaging, which they experience as akin to personal correspondence or to writing in a diary. And this technology is the one that young people—sadly, among the most disaffected from government—are most comfortable with. It pervades their daily lives in a way that even television never could.

To understand the effect of public policies on people's lives, citizens need to hear personal stories. How about a chance to meet, each week, an individual whose life was affected—for better or for worse—by decisions made by particular judges or the Supreme Court; by a particular act or policy enacted with Democratic support or allowed to lapse by a Republican Congress; by a civic action of their own, such as unionizing their workplace? How about regular online town halls, in which the president answers questions put to him by citizens over the Internet? In this way, those who log on and participate—yes, not listen but participate—can begin to experience themselves as part of a community that includes their government.

Restoring a sense of intimate connection between citizens and their government is essential to heal the corrosive divisiveness that contributes to the crippling vulnerability so many Americans now feel. And it is essential to ensure that their government can continue to provide services and protection rather than becoming their actual enemy, as, in the hands of Republican administrations, it has in fact become. ■

DEBORAH TANNEN is a professor of linguistics at Georgetown University.

## The Breakfast Crowd

Mr. President, speak directly to ordinary people.

BY CHELLIE PINGREE

I HAVE TWO WORDS FOR OUR NEXT PRESIDENT: NO EXCUSES. You will be facing an angry country frustrated by the serious challenges we confront and hungry for a leader who will actually get things done.

I am from a small town in Maine, where I occasionally join in an early-morning breakfast with a few longtime friends. One builds houses, one is the plumber, there is a

mailman, the school principal, and a retiree who moved back after years of working out of state in a manufacturing job. They are very clear about what they want. They want to be able to afford health care, whether it is their Medicare supplemental insurance or the coverage they provide their employees. They want their sons and daughters to be able to find work in the community. They want all our children to have a good education, and they care deeply about the public schools of our small town. They don't want to be uncomfortable about the actions we take in another country; they want to be proud to fly the flag.

When the breakfast crowd talks politics, whether it is about the actions coming out of the statehouse or Washington, D.C., they don't want to hear any excuses like a "closely divided Congress." They sit down to breakfast every week regardless of the different political parties they represent and see no reason why the people they elect and whose salaries they pay can't do the same. Like many Americans, my friends don't have faith in their elected officials' willingness to tackle tough challenges.

Our next president's most important task should be to restore the faith in democracy that has been eroded by the current political climate. Forget the handlers, the focus groups, the polls—just talk directly to the breakfast crowd. Talk about right and wrong, the values we all share, like honesty, fairness, and shared sacrifice and hard work. Start by changing the way politicians conduct their business and restore a little faith in the way government does its job.

Do something about the influence of money on the decision-making process and fix the system by which we finance our campaigns. It doesn't pass the straight-face test anymore. Money buys access and influence. Perhaps even worse, most politicians spend the majority of their time calling wealthy people for campaign contributions or attending fund-raisers, where they see only more people with money.

Fix the presidential public-financing system, and while you're at it, extend it to Congress so that the parties don't have to devote all their time looking for millionaires to run, and so that the voters can get what they paid for: full-time congressional representation, not people who spend the majority of their time trying to finance the next campaign. Extend the wonderful "clean-elections system" in use in Maine and Arizona state races. And find a way to tap into the power of the unprecedented number of small-money donors who stepped forward in this campaign.

Then tackle the redistricting issue. Make the elections competitive again. Though it may not be popular with your

colleagues, show your disapproval of redistricting that draws the lines so that incumbents are protected in their home districts. If you eliminate the gerrymandering of safe seats, perhaps there will be a few more members of Congress who know what it is to experience an election in which it does matter what constituents think of your votes.

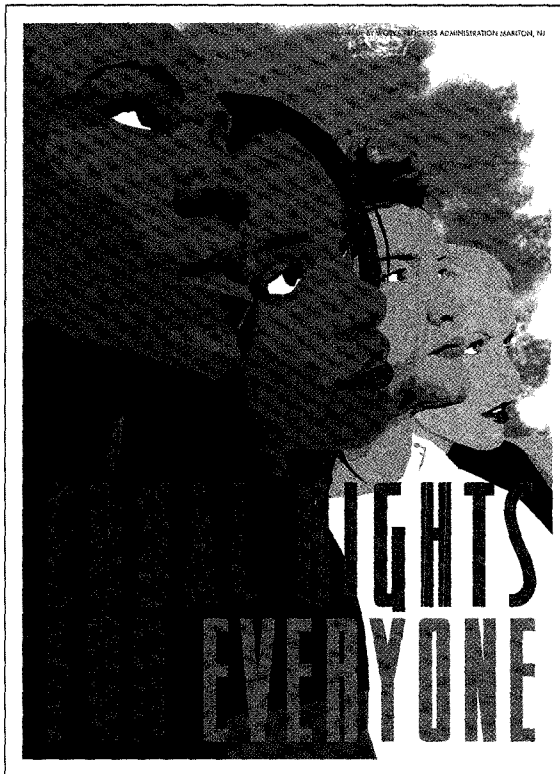
Imagine if the media reported on our politicians' actions and truly informed voters about issues. The press should be an honest politician's best friend, the source of balanced information for the American people. If well-informed, we will become strong supporters of your courageous and far-reaching legislation, which is needed to solve our growing problems. And while you're preserving the independence of the media and dealing with the terrifying consolidation of its

ownership, think ahead to the Internet. No one should have a stranglehold on the Net, either.

Return a sense of ethics to the process; don't appoint people with something to gain, don't make decisions based on whom you owe from the last campaign. (After you fix the system of financing campaigns, you won't have to do that anymore, anyway.)

If you have been doing your homework on rebuilding faith in democracy, have the people behind you because you speak honestly to them, and propose such good ideas that Congress is embarrassed into voting for them, we will all have something to look forward to. No need for excuses. ■

CHELLIE PINGREE, *former Maine Senate majority leader, is president and chief executive officer of Common Cause.*



## Leading the Races

On an ignored issue, there's much work to be done.

BY CHRISTOPHER EDLEY JR.

WE ROUTINELY SCREEN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES FOR demonstrated competence on national security, economic policy, and other supreme responsibilities. But neither major candidate has demonstrated leadership or expertise on racial and ethnic justice (though George W. Bush's record is far worse). To our collective shame, it's been a "missing issue" in the campaign. But it must not be missing among the next president's priorities, because, as Bill Clinton correctly asserted, we face no more difficult or important domestic challenge.

The to-do list has as many headings as the nation's agenda,



because racial subtexts pervade everything from juvenile justice to HIV research to the way Americans think about our security and humanitarian interests in countries whose citizens are supposedly different from “us.”

Begin with simple justice. Enforce the laws we have. Notwithstanding the overwhelming social-science evidence of continuing high rates of discrimination in employment and elsewhere, enforcement budgets have been essentially flat since 1981, their purchasing power eroded by inflation, and their focus compromised by exploding dockets for disability discrimination. Mere tens of millions of dollars would make a huge difference, but the investment never comes because leaders care too little about even this most basic agenda item.

“It’s the courts, stupid” should be a theme in the campaign, and afterward. A president can nominate middle-of-the-roads who can win Senate confirmation without taxing his political capital, or he can pick jurists who will, for a life term and within the appropriate judicial role, advance racial justice on a broad front from criminal justice to equal protection to immigrants’ rights to interpretation of the open-textured commands of civil-rights statutes. A president committed to progress on race must not pick judges through a process as indifferent to views on race as is the process we use to pick presidents.

The next president should join and lead the growing chorus of analysts and reformers who see that our criminal-justice policies, emphasizing safety through incarceration, impose too high a price on poor and minority communities for too little security payoff. Our dubiously effective but draconian practices simply would not be tolerated if young white adults were incarcerated at even half the rates facing African American and Latino communities. Yes, there’s a destructively fitful machismo in domestic policy, too. But the president can seize upon the research evidence and lead the nation out of the ugly rhetorical fog that has blinded both parties for a generation. He can replace “tough on crime” with “smart on crime” (and relieve pressure on state higher-education budgets at the same time).

For prosperity, the top civil-rights priority is narrowing racial disparities in K-12 achievement. Strident criticism of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation must not lead to abandonment of the measure’s effort to hold schools and districts accountable for narrowing racial disparities in achievement. The fact that a frightening proportion of heavily minority schools are graded “needs improvement” under NCLB is no reason to dismantle the statute. It’s a reason to demand that schools and allied social services ultimately controlled by the states do a better job. This is the leading edge of the new civil-rights agenda.

Let the president never utter the “unfunded mandate” phrase, redolent of states’ rights ideology. Equal protection and free speech are unfunded mandates. The president must insist that fairness and racial justice for children are fundamental obligations that states may not avoid because the federal bribe is too little.

The president needs to throw the full weight of his administration behind litigation to defend the voluntary integration efforts of many school boards. This is the K-12

analogue of affirmative action in higher education. The courts are divided, and we need leadership to preserve one of the very few means available to fight the growing resegregation of schools, which threatens to deepen the apartheid-lite system created by housing patterns and conservative Supreme Court opinions that undermined the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

We also need comprehensive immigration reform, including better enforcement; legalization for many of the undocumented, tax-paying workers long here; and reformed temporary worker programs to regularize the future flow across our borders in a way that reflects industry needs and economic realities. The xenophobic hostility to immigration and its hateful seepage into other realms of policy are poisonous to the continual renewal of America—a vital process, requiring presidential stewardship, which must be driven by our generosity and hope, not our resentments or fears.

Given the silence of the candidates, suggesting a progressive agenda in this domain requires a certain suspension of disbelief—or abiding faith in the possibility of redemption. ■

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CHRISTOPHER EDLEY JR. is a professor at and the dean of the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. He served on the White House staffs of Presidents Clinton and Carter.

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## Know Thine Enemies

And go after them. But *only* them.

BY ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

SINCE WORLD WAR II, AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN GENERAL has been both realistic and moderate. There have been occasional bursts of intensified anxiety and paranoid fears, but, by and large, American presidents—both the Democrats and Republicans who’ve been elected since 1948—have been able to maintain a steady course. Today, however, we are facing the first case in which extremism of the kind that Barry Goldwater once foreshadowed is now dominant in the White House. In my view, there is a very simple equation here: Extremism equals recklessness. Extremism destroys the commonsense, inner core of realism and produces reckless policies justified by demagoguery and even deception.

America cannot simultaneously wage a war against those who threaten us and become a protagonist in every other part of the world in which terrorism is directed at others. It is also senseless to claim, as Vice President Dick Cheney has, that terrorists hate all nations and all peoples.

In fact, the terrorists in Northern Ireland are waging a war against the British, and, obviously, we are on the side of the British. But the terrorists in Ulster are not waging a war on the Argentines. The terrorists in Kashmir, meanwhile, are waging a war against the Indians, but not against the Finns.

The terrorists that go after us tend to be identifiable, and

they tend to come from the Middle East. This suggests that dealing with the problems of the Middle East—not only with the security aspects of it but also with the political conflict—is the necessary focus of any serious American response. Babbling in general terms about terrorism as an abstract evil and then attacking Iraq is simply a mechanism for increasing the ranks of terrorists who define the United States as their principal enemy.

America has no choice but to act as a stabilizer in the world. No one else can play that role. The problem is that we may not be doing so if we define our relationship with others by a phrase the president has been so fond of: “If you’re not with us, you’re against us.” The implication is that our leadership is not consensual but is based on a Manichaeian doctrine: If you’re not doing what we want you to do, you define yourself as our enemy.

Instead, the United States should focus on a clear identification of which terrorists are concentrating their hostility on America. You determine where they come from and then you attempt to eliminate them. At the same time, you should undercut the political, social, and religious impulses that recruit such terrorists. In brief, you do not wage a vague, undifferentiated, theologically defined, and universal war against “terrorism with a global reach” that, unfortunately, has the effect of multiplying our enemies and replenishing the terrorist ranks. Instead, you concentrate your response directly on those who truly threaten us. And you try to destroy them and isolate them politically.

Executing this is not so difficult. We know who the terrorists are. We should be able to establish where they come from. We have some basis for judging how they are recruited. And we also should have some broad awareness of the social atmosphere that creates them.

The neoconservatives in the Bush administration have been primarily preoccupied with creating a situation in the Middle East in which there would be no major security threat. But, in effect, they have created a doctrine that—if seriously pursued in Pakistan, North Korea, Africa, Latin America, and other parts of the world—would impose undertakings and obligations that would transform the character of American society. And if these obligations were undertaken and then abandoned, it would greatly increase global insecurity.

This is why the neocons’ prescriptions are ultimately suicidal. ■

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI was President Carter’s national security adviser and is the author, most recently, of *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*.

## Labor-Inescapably!

At the very least, a return to a (modest) status-quo

BY STEVE FRASER

ONCE UPON A TIME—AS IN LONG, LONG AGO—ALL PRESIDENTS and presidential candidates were expected to have an answer for the “labor question.” Nowadays, not only are there no answers, there’s scarcely a question, at least not one demanding enough to command prolonged attention in this election year.

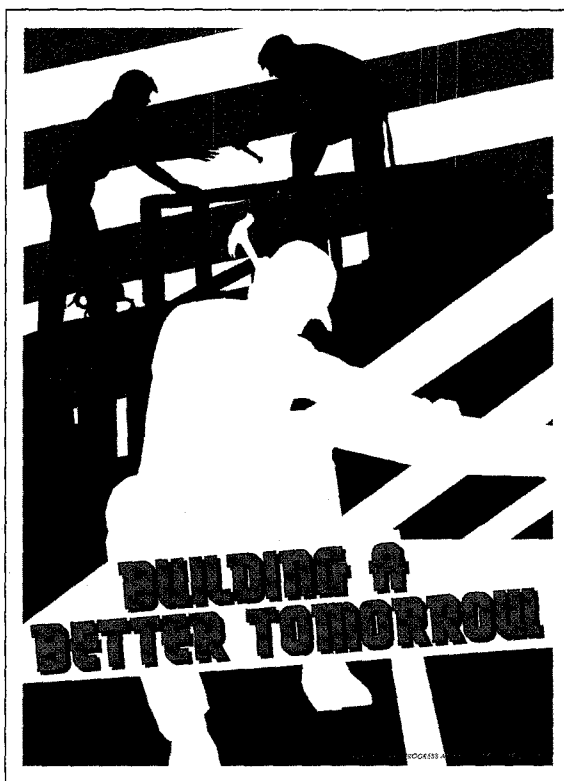
Unasked, unanswerable, yet inescapable! Jobless recovery, the most lopsided distribution of wealth and income in the industrialized world, tens of millions of the working poor, mass transfusions of American jobs abroad, a health system that could pass as a form of social triage—the list goes on and on. And it includes a labor movement so anemic it stands by helplessly watching the achievements of generations go up in smoke.

The best answer to the labor question has always been the labor movement—a robust movement would change the face of the country. So if President Kerry wants to reverse America’s descent into economic underdevelopment, he needs to do his part in making the labor movement healthy again. He could start by endorsing pending legislation designed to shore up what is now the badly eroded right to organize.

Most important are those bills sanctioning “card check” recognition of unions. There exists a raft of amendments to National Labor Relations Board procedures that would allow cards to be counted and a bargaining agent certified—with employer appeals heard afterward, rather than functioning as they now do to delay things interminably until the union fades away.

Other procedural reforms mandate heavily increased fines for firing pro-union employees. President Kerry might get behind these reforms, which have been festering in the back alleys of the Democratic Party since Jimmy Carter steered it to the right. Kerry might do something even more elementary: Issue an executive order banning any federal agency from entering into a contract with a labor-law violator. All he’d be demanding the business community do is obey the law.

Muscling up like this might make President Kerry more audacious. For example, he could push hard for the minimum-wage increase he proposed in June, not only a humane and just thing to do but one that would improve the bargaining leverage of trade unions that struggle to stay afloat in a sea of sweated





labor. Indeed, he might use his bully pulpit to chastise corporations like Wal-Mart, who've helped universalize the sweatshop and keep unions out of the only dynamic and growing sector of the economy. Amid a jobless recovery, President Kerry could remind the country that in more civilized times, we considered the 8-hour day and the 40-hour week a norm, one the rest of the industrial world takes for granted, one whose reimposition today would help spread the work around.

Bolder still, our new president might call for the repeal of Section 14B of the Taft-Hartley Labor Act, that notorious provision sanctioning "right to work" laws in the South and elsewhere that have undermined unionization in these regions since shortly after the Second World War. Then, of course, there's the small matter of globalization. But having come this far, President Kerry might go the extra mile and get serious about negotiating trade agreements that include enforceable labor standards.

What is truly remarkable about virtually all of this wish list is its modesty; one might say it's downright reactionary. A good deal of it was status quo pre-Ronald Reagan. None of it would seriously derange anything fundamental about the current arrangements in the international political economy. But sometimes back to the future is the only way forward.

Is any of this likely? Only if President Kerry believes in it—his disavowal of "redistributionist economics" is not promising in this regard—and is prepared to lead the Democratic Party out of that wilderness of its own making, which is the reason many of these proposed reforms have been sitting around gathering dust since the 1970s.

For those of us not likely to be invited to join a Kerry cabinet, the imperative is to keep up the heat. ■

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STEVE FRASER is the New Labor Forum's editor-at-large and the author of *Labor Will Rule: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor*.

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## The Return of Energy

Early and effective use of the powers of the office

BY PAUL STARR

MR. KERRY, AFTER FOUR YEARS OF SLOTHFUL LEADERSHIP, the American people may be ready for the quality that the Framers referred to as "energy in the executive." That energy, of course, can't be solely of your own making. Since the nation's founding, the eras that have decisively advanced democratic purposes have been built around a dynamic interplay of presidential leadership and popular movements. The transformational presidents have drawn energy from below even as they created energy of their own. Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson—not all rose to power out of the great movements of their time, but as president they articulated and championed the movements' aspirations and turned their ideas into enduring institutions.

Fortunately, you have a lot more to work with than Bill Clinton did. In the 1990s, after decades of decline, progressive organizations and the Democratic Party were unable to supply the combination of support and pressure that helped to drive earlier transformative presidencies. Today, however, as a result of the anger about the 2000 election and Bush-administration policies, there is more passion, activism, and outrage at the progressive base than there has been in a long time. The chances for genuine political renewal, Mr. Kerry, depend on your taking the "negative energy" of the revulsion against George W. Bush and transforming it into a positive force for public remedy.

The Democratic Party has rarely been so united in what it is against—or so unspecific about what it is for. Ever since the defeat of the Clinton health plan in 1994, major reforms have been off the agenda. In this election, the deep political differences between Democrats and Republicans over Bush's record will so dominate the campaign that the specific initiatives you propose may seem almost beside the point, except as illustrating your vision for the country. But if you win, strategic policy choices will matter a great deal.

I admire both the courage and the discretion you've shown in putting health-care reform at the top of your list of priorities. Courage, because in taking on health reform, you're taking on the forces that initially brought Clinton down. And discretion, because you've chosen a program that would achieve 95-percent coverage by expanding and subsidizing forms of insurance that already exist (Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Plan, employer-provided plans).

The political advantages of this approach are clear. Because it's not an all-or-nothing proposition, the program could be enacted in steps, much of it as part of a budget (which would require only 51 votes in the Senate). And far from threatening those with good insurance, the proposal would make their plans cheaper. Still, the opponents of reform will fight it with the same ideological weapons they used 10 years ago; your only defense will be your own eloquence and relentlessness in awakening an electorate that has become familiar with the ways of conservative deceit.

During the Bush years, measures to limit poverty and inequality have dropped out of the national conversation. The response to John Edwards' "two Americas" speech shows how resonant these concerns nonetheless continue to be. Many of your proposals on education, jobs, and taxes begin to address the great divide, and you're right to say that you'd pay for health care by rolling back the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. Every initiative ought to be paid for in a way that exemplifies the need to establish a fair balance of obligations in an America that's been tilted much too far in favor of privilege.

Continued Republican power in Congress makes it virtually impossible for you to achieve these and other objectives in a 100-day blizzard of legislation. Much of what you propose must be seen as laying the predicate for 2006 and 2008. You will have your hands full undoing Bush's mistakes—most of all, extricating the United States honorably from Iraq. But your supporters will cut you a lot of slack if from the start they know where you're headed. So far as domestic policy is concerned, the key is to make early and

effective use of the powers of your office in issuing executive orders, making appointments, and enforcing environmental, labor, and health regulations that the Bush administration has ignored. The presidency is our central political energy source. Exploit it. ■

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## Fiscal Boldness First

A progressive tax plan that moves beyond austerity

BY JOHN PODESTA

IF HE TAKES THE OATH OF OFFICE AS PRESIDENT, JOHN Kerry would inherit an upside-down economy marked by slow job growth, stagnant wages, and rising costs; twin deficits—budget and trade—that threaten havoc for the middle class; a health-care system that's facing financial chaos; a dangerous and costly occupation in Iraq; a vitally important but vastly undercapitalized homeland-security effort; and international alliances that have been mangled almost beyond recognition. Of course, the list goes on.

He may feel he's just become the mayor of hell.

On an operational level, President Kerry will be confronted by a federal government dispirited in its mission and adrift in an ocean of red ink. Thanks in large part to George W. Bush's tax cuts, he'll find that the United States is now on a steady course to a fiscal gap exceeding 5 percent of our gross domestic product as far as the eye can see. The impact on Social Security and Medicare, meanwhile, will be devastating.

Some of my colleagues from the Clinton administration are convinced that this will require President Kerry to become our country's comptroller in chief. No doubt someone is already thinking about a White House summit on deficit reduction. I offer a bolder alternative: President Kerry should direct his treasury secretary and chief economic adviser to use the mess President Bush created to pursue a bold and progressive tax reform that rewards work and expands the middle class.

Many Americans understand that the taxpayers benefiting the most from the Bush tax cuts are those needing it the least. What fewer realize are its broader implications. By concentrating income-tax cuts on the very wealthiest, creating new tax breaks for investment-tax shelters, and ignoring the crushing burden of the payroll tax on lower- and middle-income families, Bush has made the federal tax system even more complicated, unfair, and regressive than it already was.

Over the past 50 years, there has been a significant shift in the composition of federal tax receipts toward taxes supported by labor and away from taxes paid by the owners of capital. While the contribution of payroll taxes to federal tax receipts increased from 1.6 percent of GDP in 1950 to a whopping 6.8 percent of GDP in 2002, more than a third of total federal tax receipts, corporate income taxes fell from 4.8 percent of GDP during the 1950s to 1.3 percent of GDP in 2003.

By reducing taxes on income earned through investments and increasing the share of the burden shouldered by middle-class wage earners, today's system perversely punishes those willing to work hard and businesses willing to create jobs in the United States, all while rewarding the movement of capital and jobs overseas. Even Kerry's vow to repeal tax cuts for those making more than \$200,000 a year won't begin to repair the damage caused by the Bush tax cuts. He needs to go further.

President Kerry's challenge will be to craft a new tax policy that creates economic growth, strengthens the middle class, and generates the revenue needed to fund our national priorities and close the fiscal gap.

Though Washington's chattering class can't say enough about the divisions in our country, one topic where a consensus has been reached is taxes: Americans of all political persuasions want a system that is much fairer and simpler.

What would progressive tax reform look like? At the Center for American Progress, we're crafting a plan that would overhaul and simplify the entire system, reduce the number of tax brackets to three, and tax all income at the same rate, whether it be wages, salaries, capital gains, or dividends.

Our plan would also close individual and corporate tax loopholes, increase the standard deduction for low-income taxpayers, and make the payroll tax more progressive. It's an approach that would reward work, provide a measure of relief to low- and middle-income families, and generate the funds the federal government needs to meet its commitments.

Today, tax reform may not be a blip on anyone's radar screen, but the longer we delay, the larger the fiscal gap grows. If John Kerry puts the full weight of the presidency behind it, he could not only rescue the federal government from a bottomless pit of deficits; he could also help strengthen and expand the middle class. In the process he'd be succeeding at something else, too: reminding America what progressive leadership can accomplish. ■

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JOHN PODESTA was President Clinton's chief of staff from 1998 to 2001 and is currently the Center for American Progress' president and CEO.

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## Teaching Tolerance

Reveal us as human beings.

BY E.J. GRAFF

CONGRATULATIONS, MR. PRESIDENT! THE PROGRESSIVE lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) community is delighted that you have an opportunity to turn America back on a path to tolerance. Here's what we expect in return: no more, and no less, than what we got from William Jefferson Clinton.



What's that? You say that Clinton botched every piece of LGBT-related legislation he touched? True enough. His "don't ask, don't tell" policy did make life worse for lesbians and gay men in the military, increasing the numbers of gay-related discharges. And he did sign into law the nasty 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, which officially decreed that the federal marriage algorithm was limited to boy + girl, no substitutions.

But until Congress turns blue, we really don't expect you to push much LGBT-related legislation. What we *do* expect is strong moral leadership. Clinton moved LGBT issues forward by light-years, simply by talking about and treating us as full human beings and valuable American citizens.

Clinton's stand took political courage in 1991, back when LGBT issues were still radioactive. But we won that culture war. Here's a little secret that the pollsters haven't figured out: Most Americans don't really care very much about homos, one way or the other. Have you noticed how national poll results swing wildly when voters are asked whether they back a federal marriage amendment? That's because most Americans don't think enough about lesbian and gay issues to have a firm opinion either way—and are probably holding two contradictory points of view at once. On the one hand, they believe the Constitution is a sacred document, guaranteeing liberty and justice for all, and is far too important to screw up. On the other hand, they're not entirely comfortable with queers, and are nervous about opening marriage's doors. But given a few years, the ho-hum example of Massachusetts—and, soon, New Jersey—newlyweds will start dissolving those anxieties like Xanax, at least outside the Deep South. Even there, where some rad-right religious leaders insist that we're infectious sinners who can bring down civilization, large numbers of their followers now know (and like) LGBT family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors. They may know we're going to hell, but they're not quite as certain that we need to be electorally cleansed.

So here's your job: Reinforce Americans' leanings toward our better civic ideals through show and tell. When you talk about helping *all* working families, make sure your photo ops include not just senior couples, three-generation African American families, and minimum-wage moms but also lesbian and gay families (with and without kids). When you appoint lesbian and gay officials and judges and ambassadors, invite their partners or spouses and children onto the platform for the announcement and the swearing in. When you undo "don't ask, don't tell," showcase the real soldiers, sailors, pilots, translators, and Marines who've been needlessly kicked out of the military. Reveal us as human beings.

Next, tell. When LGBT folks are attacked, quickly and forcefully speak out against meanness and division, and in favor of making room for everyone. Just shut up already about how much you're against same-sex marriage—message received!—and talk instead about the globally admired, centuries-long American commitment to liberty, which keeps expanding to embrace people once despised. Agree with Dick Cheney that marriage has always and should continue to be left to the states. Insist that it hurts everyone when constitutions are amended lightly to enforce one generation's biases. Talk about getting government out of our bedrooms and back into the boardrooms, where cleansing really is needed.

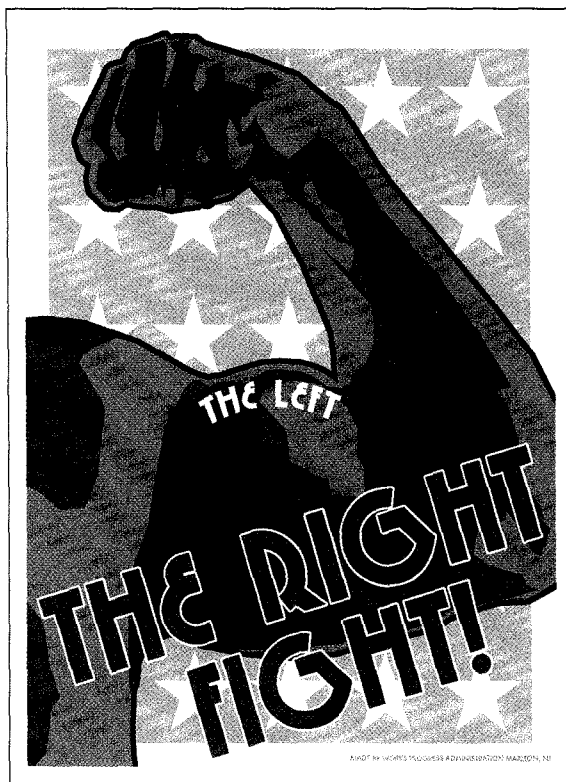
And after you've taken care of the current crises (Iraq, the

economy, restoring the bright line between church and state), please do one thing more: Take one action on behalf of the most vulnerable LGBT folks—teenagers. Kids who are just figuring out that they're gay (or whose classmates are figuring it out for them, because they're either too butch or too fey) are often miserably isolated. They're years away from being able to find—much less lean on—a wider LGBT community or family of friends. Some of these kids get kicked out into the street, or run away from beatings when their parents find out about their orientation. Others get used by the football team for target practice. Insist that no child should have to risk his or her life just by going to homeroom. Use October 11, which is National Coming Out Day, to announce a national safe-schools initiative that will protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-

gendered—indeed, *all*—kids against bullying and bashing.

The prescription is simple: Show us as human. Speak out against attacks. Help Americans live up to our civic beliefs. Talk is cheap—and very effective when used right. ■

E.J. GRAFF is a Prospect senior correspondent.



## Build an "A" Team

And fight like hell against the right.

BY SEAN WILENTZ

MY ADVICE, PRESIDENT KERRY, IS THAT YOU ASSEMBLE A political "A" team, install it in the West Wing, and fight like hell against the right over the next four years.

"We ought to have two real parties," President Franklin

Delano Roosevelt told speechwriter and adviser Sam Rosenman in 1942, "one liberal and the other conservative." Now we have two parties. Less like the blue and the red than like the blue and the gray. You won the election by realizing this and defeating the GOP attack machine.

But being a successful candidate and being a successful president are two different things. Look at Jimmy Carter, or at Bill Clinton (first term). Excellent men, fine Democrats, smart campaigners, who, as president, had a lot of bad luck they didn't deserve. But politically, they mainly kept "B" teams around them after they'd won. (Carter did bring in some aces like Hendrik Hertzberg, but they weren't enough. And Clinton wised up around the time he got around to running for his second term. Yes, I actually have nice things to say about Dick Morris, but that's for another conversation.)

As a result of the Carter and Clinton "B" teams, we got Ronald Reagan and then Newt Gingrich. Lord knows what rough beast is, as we speak, slouching towards Bethlehem.

You have great advantages over your predecessors. You're in touch with Washington. You've already learned how vicious and unrelenting the other party is. But knowing that is not enough. You have to keep fighting as if you'd never won a thing.

Fighting hard means staying fast on your feet, not plowing straight ahead. You need a team that combines fearlessness, flexibility, and class, beyond anything you've known before. Few individuals have all of these qualities; that's why you have a team. But everyone should have two out of three of these qualities. (Idealism, smarts, and commitment to your basic values are assumed.)

Think about FDR's main man, Louis Howe. Not exactly classy, but superb in everything else, enough so to win over even Eleanor before he died (too young). FDR knew how to use Howe with others—Rosenman, Harry Hopkins, Harold Ickes, James Farley—by leaning this way and that, and look at all that he and they accomplished.

Stay away from backstabbers and narcissists, who can be very hard to identify. No Raymond Moleys. (Read Arthur Schlesinger Jr. on the New Deal.) Nor half the Clinton first-termers, who went on to greater glory (ha!) by leaving and then kicking Clinton in the groin. (This is the side of Morris to guard against. And he wasn't the worst!)

Avoid "policy experts." They're either small bore or out for themselves, and they know much less about politics than they think they do. Let them talk to staff—or, if you must, use one or two as window dressing.

Make sure your communications office, from top to bot-

tom, is ruthless (while law abiding) but not transparent (like Scott McClellan).

Don't assume you've already met all the members of your "A" team. Cronyism kills. While you've been preparing yourselves all these years over on Capitol Hill, there are others who know more than you or any of your current advisers do about the Oval Office. Look around.

Leave room for some poetry in the mix. It's wrongly gotten a bad name. Clinton never quite figured this out. FDR and JFK understood it instinctively.

Rosenman, Theodore Sorensen: Americans want to admire their leaders, and you're no movie actor despite your good looks. So do it with words from your "A" team. (Remember, Reagan had great scriptwriters, too, like whoever wrote the Berlin Wall speech ...)

If things go sour, don't be afraid to fire people. Andrew Jackson got smart when he sacked nearly his entire cabinet after his rocky first couple of years. Then he had a great follow-up with his "kitchen cabinet"—some of whom he knew barely, if at all, when he was elected. George W. Bush didn't get smart, and that's a big reason why you're president.

But mainly, hire the best people, fighters who keep their heads. "Why not the best?" was Jimmy Carter's line. He never quite followed his own advice, at least not all the time.

You must. If you don't, none of the many excellent suggestions in this symposium will have a snowball's chance of coming true. Liberalism never gained a political majority on its good ideas alone. That takes intelli-

gent, relentless execution—and constant awareness of how far the other side will go in order to stop you. ■

SEAN WILENTZ is Dayton-Stockton Professor of History at Princeton University.



## Independence Day

Galvanizing public support for a real energy plan

BY DEB CALLAHAN

IF I HAD 15 MINUTES WITH THE FUTURE PRESIDENT KERRY, I would not have to educate him about my ideas for energy security. That's because he already has a deep understanding of them. Making America energy independent, strengthening our national security, and protecting the environment are causes



that John Kerry has fought for his entire career in public life.

And with America's national security at stake, combined with uncertain energy supplies, he knows we need a bold vision for a sustainable energy future.

Regrettably, for the past three and a half years, the Bush administration has pursued a drastically different course. Instead of working toward lowering our dependence on foreign oil in the long term and helping to stimulate energy conservation in the short term, the Bush administration continues down a path that has caused U.S. taxpayers to support massive subsidies to already profitable and polluting energy industries while neglecting development of new clean-energy sources.

Given the opportunity to share one priority idea with President Kerry to change the status quo and move in a new direction, I would propose the following three national principles toward achieving energy sustainability and security:

**1. Invest in new technologies and alternative fuels.** We need to make major investments in research and development of clean, renewable energy sources, like wind, solar power, and hydrogen fuel cells. New, innovative technologies already exist and are being implemented slowly, but the lack of leadership at our highest levels of government fails to promote these sustainable energy sources.

**2. Energy efficiency.** We need to establish tax incentives that help consumers buy and manufacturers build fuel-efficient cars, and we need to devise other incentives for more energy-efficient buildings and homes.

**3. Increase fuel-economy standards for cars and trucks.** We can begin today to provide incentives for converting domestic assembly lines to manufacture highly efficient cars, increase consumer choice, and strengthen the U.S. auto industry.

By pursuing these principles, we can lessen our vulnerability to energy price shocks and our reliance on oil from unstable regions around the globe, thus strengthening our national security. Second, by investing in alternative fuels and energy-efficiency technology, we will tap America's can-do spirit and ingenuity to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and spur economic growth. Lastly, as an environmentalist, I believe this new, forward-thinking, innovative approach to energy policy will provide for a cleaner, healthier, and safer environment.

An unprecedented initiative for energy security and sustainability would also once and for all shatter the perception of the false choice between a clean environment and a strong economy. Instead, such a plan closely binds these two notions together, creating a win-win situation for working Americans, for the environment, and for future generations.

This concept for energy security and sustainability is bolstered by the fact that the public overwhelmingly supports the underlying principles and the reasons for achieving this worthy goal. But even so, public opinion must be galvanized. Kerry could start doing that by putting energy security at the top of his administration's agenda, making it a focal point of his first State of the Union address. He could follow with a series of speeches around the country. By taking into account interests as diverse as the auto industry in the Midwest to solar power in the Sun Belt to wind farms in the West, John Kerry could galvanize public support while promoting

pre-existing state and local energy initiatives that harness new technologies and alternative energy sources. Much as he has done on the campaign trail, Kerry, should he win, could use the power of the office to make sure that all Americans understand that energy security and independence mean that we can reach a day when our nation will no longer be at the whim of oil-rich governments, a day when we truly have a new America with a sustainable energy future. I believe the American public will listen and respond positively.

I would urge John Kerry not to back down from the bold energy plan he has outlined on the campaign trail. And I would encourage him to continue exhibiting visionary leadership by speaking out to Congress and the American people for a comprehensive and safer energy policy. ■

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DEB CALLAHAN is the president of the League of Conservation Voters.

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## Be a Hero

A president must create his moment, not stumble on it.

BY ASHLEY BELL

THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT KERRY ON JANUARY 20, 2005, will be the beginning of the global post-Bush era. As a young American, I would give President Kerry one central, and simple, piece of advice: Be a hero. His success at recasting the issues in a progressive light can only occur if he takes immediate hold of his mandate from the people and uses it boldly. And his election *will* be a mandate, no matter how narrow, because it will reflect how much America wants and needs to be reunited.

Young people in America want a hero. There is no challenge or dream too big for the idealism that comes with being young in America. Kerry must capitalize on the post-Bush exhaustion of being kept afraid. The war on terrorism needs to be fought, and fought vigorously; but it also must be rearticulated through the optimistic lenses of progressive vision, not brandished as a blunt instrument that keeps Americans suspended in a childlike state of fear. For starters, President Kerry should abolish the colored terror-alert system. Nobody knows what the colors mean, and those who do can't figure out what to do with what color. Kerry will need to send the clear message that while America may be out of the Bushes, it is not yet out of the woods. This message must be reassuring and firm, but sealed with a promise that he will never play on our fears.

On the domestic front, we need a real vision to close the gap between the haves and the have-nots. A message that addresses poverty in America always hits home with young people. Most of us have firsthand experience in what it's like to be poor, either working our way through college or struggling to make it in the job market. Far too many young people in America are without health care, and a federal budget that would allow state governments to extend these benefits would be a major first step in the right direction.

But again, to really get through to young people, Kerry needs to be bold. A poor people's campaign that would unveil an agenda to close the gap between rich and poor, create a robust middle class, and ensure that no one working full-time will be left without access to health care would strike a deep chord with many young people. Such a campaign must have all the characteristics of a grass-roots campaign.

Politicians put too much stock in television. To reach young people, President Kerry would need to take his message to the people. Much as Martin Luther King Jr. traveled the country to drum up support for his 1963 March On Washington, President Kerry could lend his imprimatur and authority to a March for a People's Agenda. A grass-roots campaign launched in targeted areas would help in getting Congress' attention and support, one member at a time. The potential to reset the tone in Washington, to rewrite the books on progressivism by having a massive grass-roots movement led by the commander in chief, would give America a chance to wrap its arms around principled progressive leadership.

The beginning of every progressive era is marked by a moment in time when someone special says or does something special to capture the hearts and minds of the doubting. I would advise President Kerry to create his own moment, not stumble across it. This idea maybe be called too daring, too risky, a near-impossible feat. Well, young people in America want a hero. John Kerry has the Purple Hearts to prove his courage, and demonstrating heroism is the way special people like John Kerry are called to live their lives. ■

ASHLEY D. BELL is the national president of the College Democrats of America and is currently a candidate for the Georgia Legislature.

## Civilization's Price

The simple truth: We need higher, and smarter, taxes.

BY ROBERT S. MCINTYRE

IF JOHN KERRY IS ELECTED THIS FALL, HIS NO. 1 TASK WILL be to deal with the huge budget mess George W. Bush's tax cuts have created. Which begs the question: How could President Kerry build public support for the higher taxes our country desperately needs?

So far, Kerry hasn't shown any inclination to talk seri-

ously about taxes. Yes, he has proposed rolling back some of the Bush tax cuts for people making more than \$200,000 a year. But he wants to devote all the revenue that raises to new tax cuts, mainly for the middle class. In fact, the Tax Policy Center calculates that Kerry's overall tax plan would *reduce* revenues by \$617 billion over the next decade.

To be sure, Kerry's tax cuts are only half as big as the \$1.2 trillion in additional tax cuts that Bush is proposing—and much better targeted. Yet with federal income taxes down to their lowest level as a share of the economy since before World War II, you'd hope Kerry would do a lot better than Bush Lite. He can and should.

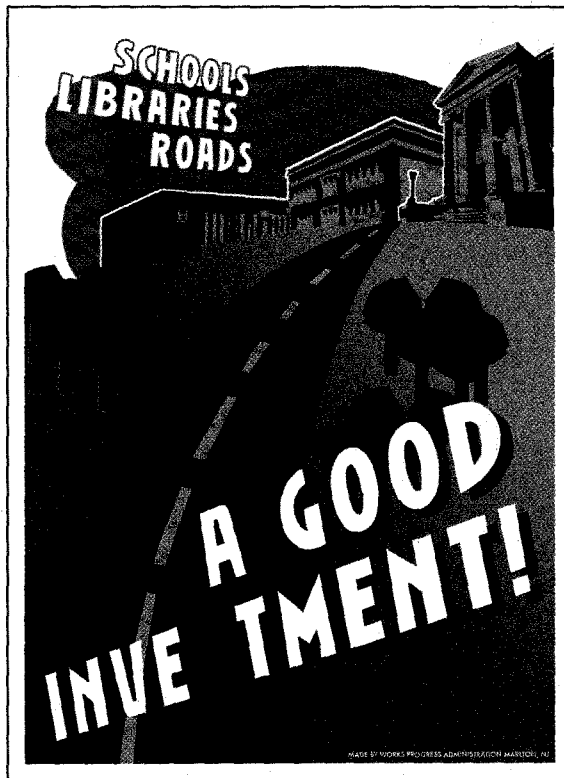
Kerry's pollsters have undoubtedly told him that voters enthusiastically favor public services, but generally prefer not to have to pay for them. True enough (duh). But that's just a statement about human nature, not a prescription for rational public policy.

The truth is that most people are willing to pay their fair share for public services. But nobody wants to be a chump. So Kerry has to show the public that everyone else is chipping in, too. Because that's demonstrably not the case now, Kerry needs to propose some major reforms to make his case.

**Much better tax enforcement.** Under Republican leadership, the Internal Revenue Service has been denied both the authority and the means to crack down on tax cheating. As a result, hundreds of billions of dollars a year in taxes legally owed go uncollected, and the biggest tax evaders are wealthy individuals and corporations. Kerry should propose a major expansion in the IRS audit

budget, expanded reporting requirements, tougher penalties, and so forth. That way honest taxpayers—still the vast majority of us—can have some confidence we're not being ripped off by the unscrupulous. If Republicans want to complain that many tax cheats are "small businesses," well, bring it on.

**Fewer loopholes.** Republicans may have a leg up on Democrats when it comes to zeal for tax loopholes, but both parties are guilty of using the tax code to promote a vast array of favored activities. One result is that taxpayers with similar incomes can be treated wildly differently depending on how they make their money (e.g., capital gains versus wages) or how they spend it. Another problem is that the IRS' scarce resources are diverted away from collecting taxes and toward running what amount to tax-based spending programs—and, by necessity, running them poorly. Unfortunately, Kerry's own platform calls for \$229 billion in new tax breaks for health care and college tuition. These may be noble goals, but they shouldn't be larded onto our already overburdened tax code. Instead, a simpler code with far fewer tax breaks should be





high on Kerry's tax agenda—and would help restore much-needed respect for the tax system. Kerry could start by addressing a problem that his vice-presidential nominee, John Edwards, complained about frequently during the primaries: our extremely low taxes on investment income versus wages.

**Tax the rich—but we all have to help pay for our government.** To his credit, Kerry proposes scaling back Bush's tax cuts for very well-off people. Making the tax code more progressive could help boost taxpayer morale, and is also good for our pocketbooks, as progressive taxes are always less of a burden on middle- and low-income taxpayers than equal-revenue alternatives. But Kerry's expensive proposal to cut taxes on the middle class is unaffordable and unnecessary. Remember how Bill Clinton mostly staved off Republican tax-cut efforts in his second term by insisting we needed to use the budget surpluses to "save Social Security first"? Kerry should make a similar case against Bush, who in his current budget calls for slashing domestic appropriations by a quarter as a share of the economy by fiscal year 2009.

Poll after poll finds that most voters say they are willing to forgo tax cuts to avoid enormous reductions in education, transportation, law enforcement, and other popular programs. Of course, there's no guarantee that they'll feel the same way in the voting booth. But if John Kerry can't make the case for reversing Bush's bankrupt tax and budget policies before the election, we can only hope he's planning to do so starting in 2005. ■

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ROBERT S. MCINTYRE is the director of Citizens for Tax Justice.

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## The Vital Middle

Redeeming and defending middle-class values

ELIZABETH WARREN AND  
AMELIA WARREN TYAGI

REMEMBER ALL THOSE SPEECHES YOU GAVE FILLED WITH statistics and stories about the middle-class squeeze? You spoke the truth. Wages really are stagnant, and we really are struggling to buy the basics. The core of a middle-class life—a home, health insurance, a good education for our children, the things our parents could take for granted—is rapidly moving out of reach. Debt, defaults, and foreclosures for a typical middle-class family have soared in the past four years. Every 15 seconds, one of our middle-class neighbors collapses into bankruptcy.

You already know this. Your opponent called you a pessimist for talking about it—and watched nervously when people nodded in agreement as you spoke. We elected you because we believed, "Here's a guy who gets it."

Now, turn your speeches into reality. But before you launch policy proposals, speak to us about our values. Talk about how you will help us dream again for ourselves and our children. Here's what we want to hear:

**Fairness matters.** We will *not* accept the Enron-ization of America, where insider deals and corporate welfare tilt the playing field in favor of well-connected mega-businesses and

political friends. Stand for fair play—not handouts, not special interests—just plain, old-fashioned, everyone-plays-by-the-same rules. In the name of fairness, stop the rogues in the financial-services industry who quietly steal families' homes and pensions. Reject welfare cheats, corporate cheats, or cheats of any other stripe. Speak to us of fundamental fairness, and we will believe again in what we can be.

**The future comes first.** Our children are our best natural resource. We cannot risk wasting a single one of them. Parents are stretched to the financial breaking point, and many worry that when a Democrat talks about helping children, it really means taking our money to help some *other* child. Push for high-quality schools for *every* child, including ours. Please remember that preschool, K-12, *and* college are all necessary to prepare for tomorrow's economy, so put universal preschool and affordable college high on the agenda. And when you talk about the future, expose budget trickery and chronic deficits for what they are: "taxing our children."

**Hard-working Americans deserve the basics.** Dig deep into the reasons why families are working hard and sliding backward: The basics now cost more than average families can afford no matter how hard they work. Get us started on a virtuous circle. When *all* schools improve, families won't have to pay a king's ransom to buy housing in decent school districts. When *everyone* has health insurance, the costs will go down for us all. Keep our vision on what we deserve for our hard work, and we will pull together to make it happen.

**A strong democracy requires a strong middle class.** Our democracy rests on a rock-solid middle class that resists extremism and zealotry. Revitalizing the middle is an act of true patriotism, and it should be treated as nothing less. Call on our patriotism; we are ready to answer.

And now for a few words on how *not* to galvanize America:

**Avoid the language of poverty and handouts.** Families want a chance to work hard and earn the basics. Government policies that make education and health insurance accessible to everyone are *not* handouts for the needy but policies to strengthen America.

**It is not about class warfare.** The rich are not the enemy—in fact, most of us would like to be rich. Corruption and misplaced priorities are the enemy. And the poor are not the only ones who have problems, so don't talk as if they are the only ones who deserve compassion. Americans risk fracturing into disparate groups, jealously guarding whatever benefits we have gained, pursuing separate identities instead of the country's shared identity as part of one great American middle class. That makes us nervous. Lead from the middle, because a middle-focused agenda helps *all* Americans, including our poor and our wealthy.

Sir, it has been a long time since a president made our hearts race. We are feeling intense pressure, and we want a leader who will strengthen our families and our country. Our middle class has been forged by families who have known hardship and conflict, and we dream of giving our children something better. We are fighters. Help us fight for our dream. ■

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# Lyndon Agonistes

**When Democrats celebrate their lineage, one name is usually conspicuous in its absence. The erasure of LBJ says far less about him than about how liberals make use of history.**

**BY RICHARD BYRNE**

AS DEMOCRATS FLOCK TO BOSTON TO NOMINATE JOHN Kerry for president, few surprises will await them at the Fleet Center. Today's political conventions stay relentlessly "on message," and they serve as mere heralds of the home stretch of a seemingly endless presidential campaign.

A key part of that unwavering message is a recounting of party values and triumphs. And just as the late Ronald Reagan will provide a thematic touchstone for Republicans convening in New York City, Democrats will recite a legacy that extends from Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Harry Truman to John F. Kennedy to Jimmy Carter to Bill Clinton.

One true surprise in Boston would be to hear the name of Lyndon Baines Johnson invoked as a link in that chain. At nearly every convention since LBJ left office in 1969, Democratic presidential aspirants have kept America's 36th president out of their quadrennial message to America. George McGovern ignored Johnson completely in his 1972 acceptance speech. In 1976, Carter gave LBJ one effusive sentence, then lumped him together with Hubert Humphrey in a sentence four years later. Walter Mondale ignored Johnson in 1984. Michael Dukakis yoked LBJ to JFK in a single sentence evoking a "spirit of energy and of confidence and of idealism" in 1988. From there, the downward spiral of LBJ's reputation among Democrats has only accelerated. Clinton omitted Johnson from both of his acceptance speeches. Al Gore mentioned a Johnson three times in his 2000 address in Los Angeles—a St. Louis woman named Jacqueline Johnson. Lyndon Baines was again left on the sidelines.

From the vantage point of history, this pattern of studied omission is puzzling. Johnson was the Democratic Party's most accomplished leader of the last 50 years, including Clinton's largely successful presidency. This is a bold claim, but its merits extend far past LBJ's 1964 landslide (his total that year remains the largest percentage of the popular vote ever received by a Democrat in any presidential election). For starters, Johnson's influence extends deep into not one but two branches of government; in fact, his mastery of the legislative branch paved the way for his success as president in passing an avalanche of legislation to improve the nation and advance individual rights and liberty. Known collectively as the Great Society, LBJ's initiatives protected and broadened citizens' rights to housing, employment, health care, product safety, a cleaner environment, and the ballot box.

Beyond the Great Society, Johnson also helped transform a moribund U.S. Senate. By 1954, he was already that chamber's minority leader. When he stepped into the majority leader's chair with a narrow majority in 1955, he revived the Senate power and prestige with a combination of brute force and charm. By 1957, Johnson had managed to push the Senate on its tentative first steps to reversing its polarity as a negative force on civil rights to a positive one, forcing the first voting-rights legislation through that chamber since Reconstruction.

Johnson passed that legislation in part by bucking his own Senate history as a civil-rights obstructionist. Reversing polarity was also a key to LBJ's trickiest moment as president: his first days in office. Johnson succeeded in holding the nation together after the devastating shock of Kennedy's assassination in part by sublimating his own ambitions. He kept most of JFK's staff in place and adopted much of his predecessor's program as his own in that moment. "Let us continue," he told the nation in a speech to Congress five days after the assassination.

Of course, Johnson did more than continue JFK's legacy on the domestic front. He broadened it and deepened it—and got it through Congress. In many ways, the vision behind LBJ's legislative commotion remains a persuasive summary of progressive values. "At the heart of it," wrote Johnson in his 1971 memoirs, *The Vantage Point*, "I thought of the Great Society as an extension of the Bill of Rights. When our fundamental rights were set forth by the Founding Fathers, they reflected the concerns of a people who sought freedom in their time. But in our time, a broadened concept of freedom requires that every American have the right to a healthy body, a full education, a decent home and the opportunity to develop to the best of his talents."

Now, with Clinton's memoirs flooding bookstores and the solemn pomp and sunset pageantry of the Reagan funeral lingering in the sticky summer air, Americans once again find themselves assessing presidential legacies. For Clinton and Reagan, such judgments hew strictly to predictable partisan lines. But the legacy of Lyndon Baines Johnson offers Americans an enigmatic puzzle—a legacy snakebit from both sides of the partisan divide.

On the right, contempt for Johnson is easy to understand. Conservatives loathe Johnson precisely because of his im-





pressive domestic legacy, and they have dedicated nearly three decades to rolling back LBJ's avalanche. But on the left, where Johnson's domestic vision and concrete achievements should find allies, there exists wariness bordering on contempt. Much of this feeling is generational; it is bound up tightly with the national nightmare of the Vietnam War. For certain, LBJ knew that Vietnam was an unmovable object in his path to presidential greatness. Johnson's decision to reject counsel from numerous colleagues (including his former mentor, Georgia Senator Richard Russell) and expand the war despite his own doubts about victory swallowed up the cash he needed for his Great Society. It established the much-ballyhooed "credibility gap" in the public imagination. Most importantly, Johnson's tragic error—and his persistence in it—sent thousands of young Americans to their deaths.

Yet the war is not the only well-spring of progressive discontent with LBJ. Many of the most vicious attacks on Johnson and his legacy from the left are rooted in a particular—and particularly incendiary—charge: that he helped to plot Kennedy's death (to wit: Oliver Stone's *JFK*). The most recent eruption of this slur surfaced in February, when The History Channel aired a documentary (later withdrawn from future broadcast on the channel) called *The Guilty Men*, which accused LBJ of directing the murder of JFK and others. But such nonsense—debunked quickly by a team of scholars assigned by the network to investigate complaints from Johnson's widow, Lady Bird, and former Presidents Carter and Gerald Ford—is simply the most outlandish symptom of more general popular contempt for Johnson.

At times, this contempt is cartoonish in its venom. In a recent essay in the journal *Representations*, Greil Marcus likened Johnson to the title character in Alfred Jarry's brutal fin-de-siècle play *Ubu Roi*: "(T)he huge clumsy monster personifying authority without intelligence, power without motive, respectability without honor ...." And with what company does Marcus place Johnson in making this comparison? Idi Amin, Slobodan Milosevic, Rasputin, and Fatty Arbuckle, among others. At times, this assault on LBJ is more serious, a depiction of Johnson as a crude, venal, and boorish murderer with no redeeming qualities whatsoever. It is the left, not the right, that saw Johnson as "late to the party" on race and directed at him the most menacingly catchy anti-war slogan in American history: "Hey, hey, LBJ! How many kids did you kill today!"

This liberal portrait of Johnson is not that of a human being. It is a perverse caricature. When progressives persist in privileging LBJ's errors over his accomplishments 30 years after

Vietnam, they cut out a link of a vital legacy that connects Kerry and Clinton to Roosevelt and Truman. Why they do so, however, requires a deeper look into the progressive mind-set.

THE ISSUE, SIMPLY, IS THIS: PROGRESSIVES, BY DISPOSITION, hold assumptions about history and politics that prevent them from assessing Johnson's legacy in civil rights and social welfare in a positive light.

Along with their profound policy differences, progressives and conservatives also diverge in their respective views of history. The fact that conservatives celebrate Ronald Reagan in spite of his flaws is not merely blind partisanship; it is part and parcel of the conservative idea of history. That conception sees mankind and its institutions as inherently flawed, prone to backsliding and outright barbarity without strong leadership. That conservatives have not shunned Richard Nixon as liberals have shunned LBJ is yet another sign of how deeply conservatives encourage a vision of their champions as a whole—Watergate as part of an entire record, and not the sum of the man. Conservatives see singular moments of exceptional genius, such as the founding of the United States, or clear tactical triumphs, such as the ending of the Cold War, as more than mere events on a time line. Such moments, and those who led Americans to them, are nurtured to an almost mythic stature and reinforced against attack. It is a notion rooted in



Down: Progressives focus on LBJ's tragic error in Vietnam.

the very word "conservative"—the notion of conservation, preservation, and remembrance.

Thus, how an eminent conservative historian such as Forrest McDonald depicts the men who drafted the U.S. Constitution provides an unalloyed glimpse into this worldview. In an essay published as the appendix to his new memoir, *Recovering the Past*, McDonald and his wife, Ellen S. McDonald, argue that any major rewriting or emendation of the Constitution is "as presumptuous as it is uninformed." The McDonalds approvingly cite Thomas Jefferson's view that the Framers were "demigods" and contend that "the formation of the republic was a product of America's Golden Age, the likes of which we shall not see again."

Such a view strikes progressives as utterly inimical. Why include a process to amend the document if it is writ in stone? What work of humankind cannot somehow be improved? This skeptical antipode to McDonald is rooted in the work of his great nemesis and goad, Charles A. Beard, whose 1913 classic, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, sought to strip away the bunting that adorned America's founding document and closely re-examine the

men who wrote it. Beard argued that the preservation of the Founders' economic interests—and mercenary ones at that—lay as much at the heart of the document as grand notions of statehood and liberty.

Though McDonald's 1958 book, *We the People*, effectively refuted many of Beard's particular arguments about the Constitution and its Framers, Beard's book profoundly changed history—and the study of history—in the United States. (McDonald, in his introduction to a 1986 edition of *An Economic Interpretation*, argues that "Beard's work made those of his critics and defenders necessary and useful.") Beard's historical approach has resonated strongly among liberals. In Beard's ambitious and self-assured gambit, progressives encounter a view of history that aligns with their political aspirations—history as an arc rising upward and away from imperfect beginnings and oppression to ever greater heights of liberty and enfranchisement.

To see history this way encourages devaluation, be it great or small, of the inadequate and imperfect past in favor of a greater future. Progressives' firm faith in the perfectibility of the American project can lead not only to a questioning of America's past—à la Beard—but a tendency to dwell upon its flaws and blunders. It is an impoverishment of the past as a necessary precondition of expressing faith in an ever more perfect American union. The Jefferson of our own age, for liberals, is as much the hypocritical, slave-owning member of the gentry as he is the author of the Declaration of Independence—and to some minds, perhaps more so.

Ultimately, this historical viewpoint ripened to a fullness found in works such as Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, which removes political forces from their central place in history in favor of a deliriously egalitarian view. "[M]ost histories," writes Zinn, "understate revolt, overemphasize statesmanship, and thus encourage impotency among citizens."

Questioning history, filling in its blanks, debating its myths, and bringing to light its missing chapters are to be valued. But such a view of history prevents a proper appreciation of LBJ's legacy. After all, Johnson's accomplishments are not merely imperfect, incomplete, or insufficient in this view; they bear the foul taint of politics. If one accepts the Zinn view of history as a battlefield on which progress is made *despite* politicians, LBJ was a barrier to progress, and thus not a progressive.

That Johnson's rise to power features manifold episodes of ugliness and scandal digs the hole for his legacy among progressives that much deeper. As the first two volumes of Robert Caro's monumental (and as yet unfinished) biography of Johnson, *The Path to Power* and *Means of Ascent*, attest, LBJ's ascension to power was coarse from its first stirrings. He used every tool available to him: parliamentary maneuvering, blatant strong-arming, deception, and even fraud. Laid bare by historians, his tactics strike all but the most cynical among us as distasteful and dishonest. They have damaged our view of his character and tainted his ends with the meanness of his means. In his introduction to *The Path to Power*, Caro wrote of Johnson's "hunger for power

in its most naked form, for power not to improve the lives of others, but to manipulate and dominate them, to bend them to his will." Historian Robert Dallek took aim at this spin on LBJ's legacy in the introduction to the first book of his two-volume biography, 1991's *Lone Star Rising*. Dallek argues that "when ... unsavory revelations are related with little emphasis on Johnson's contribution to the transformation of America between 1937 and 1969, the years of LBJ's congressional and executive service, it leaves us with an unflattering portrait of a self-serving man who made little difference in recent American history."

Often, great historians such as Caro and Dallek arrive at a more nuanced picture as they move forward in their life studies. Caro's third volume on LBJ, 2002's *Master of the Senate*, is more generous to Johnson as a man. It is also a book that seems perpetually astonished by LBJ's political genius, stamina, and sheer audacity. (One wonders if Caro himself succumbed to the legendary "Johnson treatment" that he first sketched out in *The Path to Power*, with its "blend of threats and pleading, of curses and cajolery.") Nuance can move in the other direction as well. Dallek's second volume, *Flawed Giant*, ends perched on its title's exquisite straddle, resigned at last to evoke LBJ's "great achievement and terrible failure ... lasting gains and unforgettable losses." Dallek spends a portion of the afterword mulling over LBJ's "psychological incapacity" near the end of his term before concluding that "he remained largely in control of his faculties and more than capable of functioning as President."

**Progressives' faith in perfectibility can lead both to questioning the past and to dwelling on its blunders.**

BUT IF HISTORIANS CAN WEIGH FLAWS and strengths and still place Johnson in the upper tier of presidents, why can't progressives do the same? Rank-and-file liberals, it seems, have their story, and they're sticking to it. Theirs is a view of history as a climb best undertaken without the weight of politics, which has been amplified by the portrait of LBJ in popular culture past and present—Johnson the dog abuser, holding his pet beagle up by the ears for the paparazzi; Johnson as the target of "Hey, hey, LBJ!"; Johnson, once again caught on tape, burping as he orders some pants from Joe Hagar of the Dallas-based menswear company, telling him: "The crotch down where your nuts hang—it's always a little too tight. It's like riding a wire fence. See if you can't give me an inch where the zipper ends, right back to my bunghole."

Truth be told, LBJ's problem with history began before he even left office. White House recordings show Johnson fretting over the damage that the publication of William Manchester's 1967 book on the JFK assassination, *The Death of a President*, might do to his political fortunes. He was right to worry. Though the book didn't link Johnson to the slaying, Manchester did inaugurate a motif that has been seized upon by Camelot acolytes and conspiracy theorists alike ever since: LBJ as callous and grasping for power in the very instant after Kennedy's death. It is a perverse vision of LBJ as Hill Country Claudius, conspiring to bait the dueling rapier, poison the wine, and do away with America's sweet, brainy prince.

In this respect, Oliver Stone's 1992 film, *JFK*, is a crucial doc-



ument in the decline of LBJ's fortunes in popular culture. The film, which grossed more than \$205 million worldwide, is the nexus where Camelot meets conspiracy. Stone is canny enough not to accuse Johnson directly of being part of the plot. But he does show Johnson as moving quickly, and malevolently, to trash the Kennedy legacy and destroy the good that might have been. Specifically, Stone has Kennedy having decided to end America's commitment in Vietnam, and Johnson ratcheting it up. The quote that Stone puts in Johnson's mouth ("Just get me elected, and then you can have your war.") is taken from historian Stanley Karnow's book *Vietnam: A History*. Karnow claims that Johnson said it a month *after* the assassination, at a Christmas Eve gathering with military brass—and he posits that Johnson was glad-handing the generals, not making them an explicit promise. Yet the manner in which Stone threads this supposed statement into the complex tale told by the mysterious "X" (played by Donald Sutherland) to a credulous Jim Garrison (Kevin Costner) leaves more than a sticky tar of LBJ's guilt by association with the viewer. Isn't it funny, X says, that LBJ signed a memorandum supposedly reversing JFK's decision to get out of Vietnam four days after the assassination? And then the Johnson quote, which was really from a month later, slides in.

One also can point out that the memo Johnson signed (with few changes) was drafted before JFK went to Dallas and most likely would have been signed by Kennedy had he returned. But in a deeper sense, Stone's use of LBJ is a malicious prank played by a filmmaker who weds the machinery of pop culture to that progressive view of history.

The tale of X is blowsy conspiracy theory bolstered by a passionately held counterfactual: History *could* have been better; Vietnam would have gone away; America's hopes and dreams, perpetually frozen in Jack's and Bobby Kennedy's untimely deaths, were squandered and traduced by Johnson.

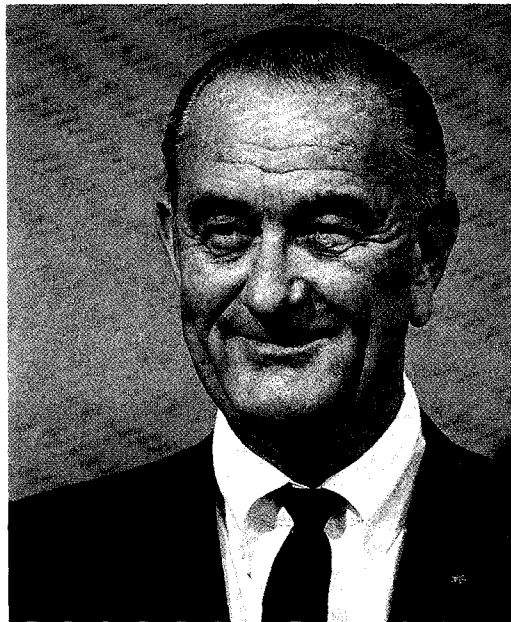
LYNDON JOHNSON KNEW THAT HE WOULD HAVE A PROBLEM with history. The most moving moments in Doris Kearns Goodwin's history-cum-memoir of the LBJ years, 1976's *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, arrive whenever Johnson presses Goodwin to help him with his own memoir. "Those memoirs," he tells her plaintively, "are the last chance I've got with the history books."

Yet the concrete achievements of Johnson cited at the beginning of this essay remain. These achievements come more clearly into focus when the America that he inherited as president is conjured, as Bill Moyers did in a 1986 speech reprinted in a new book, *Moyers on America*: "[I]n 1967, 75 percent of all Americans over sixty-five had no medical insurance and a third of the elderly lived in poverty. More than 90 percent of all black adults in the South were not registered to

vote, and across the nation there were only about two hundred elected officials who were black."

Certainly, none of the above could be said of America after Johnson's tenure. In practical terms, LBJ's decision to embrace civil rights remains one of the most politically courageous moves by a president in recent memory. Progressives lose much when they cast off LBJ and his legacy—all of the above, and still more. They lose a model in balancing the roles of ferocious electoral partisan and tenacious legislative bipartisan. They also lose an alternative view of power—what it is, where it resides in our nation, and valuable lessons in how to use it wisely and foolishly. Johnson knew such things intimately, and was willing to spend (or, in the case of Vietnam, misspend) that power, rather than hoard it.

In summing up his decision not to run in 1968, Johnson had this to say about power in his memoir: "Men, myself included, do not lightly give up the opportunity to achieve so much lasting good, but a man who uses power effectively must also be a realist. He must understand that by spending power, he dissipates it. Because I had not hesitated to spend the Presidential power in the pursuit of my beliefs or in the interests of my country, I was under no illusion that I had as much power in 1968 as I had had in 1964."



Up: There's another LBJ who was courageous and visionary.

It is a remarkable statement. When I read it, Milan Kundera's essay in *Testaments Betrayed*, in which he talks about the fog of history, came directly to mind. Kundera argues, "Man proceeds in a fog. But when he looks back to judge people of the past, he sees no fog on their path. From his present, which was their faraway past, their path looks

perfectly clear to him, good visibility all the way. Looking back, he sees the path, he sees the people proceeding, he sees their mistakes, but not the fog."

Those who judge history's fogged-in denizens from the comfortable present, Kundera is arguing, may be blinder still. But one needn't go that far. We rely on history's clearer view to make judgments. It is a view that invites us to do so.

Yet history does not require us to be judgmental. To reclaim the legacy of Johnson, progressives need not refrain from questioning the past or debunking its errors. They must simply acknowledge that good—and not just ill—can emerge from the murk of America's political history; that the project of achieving a better future does not depend on defenestration of the past. Indeed, progressives may strengthen their claims to political relevance if they marry the hope of their historical vision to the concrete achievements of LBJ and others, accomplished in that fog. ■

RICHARD BYRNE's writing on politics, foreign affairs, and music has appeared in *Foreign Policy*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Phoenix*, and other publications.



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# The Talking Cure

If elected, Kerry would fight terrorism with diplomacy, not war. But can diplomacy win?

BY LAURA SECOR

PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL JOHN KERRY SEEMS IN MANY WAYS the perfect foreign-policy foil to President George W. Bush. Educated partly in Switzerland and fluent in French, Kerry is the son of a diplomat who worked intensively with U.S. allies during the early Cold War. And so Kerry inherited the vision of a world rife with complexity and susceptible to reason—one where the power of diplomacy was an article of faith, even while military solutions couldn't be discounted. Kerry touts a "bold, progressive internationalism" in his foreign-policy speeches, and in his statements on Iraq, he has all but promised a return to the multilateralist, institution-based foreign policy so many Democratic strategists deem vital to U.S. security.

That diplomacy and alliances are essential tools in the pursuit of the national interest, and that military muscle is to be avoided except in the case of last resort, were once simple truisms of the bipartisan, realist foreign-policy establishment. Today, however, a significant challenge to that worldview has risen from the right. In the face of a vast and nebulous terrorist threat, and in the absence of any countervailing superpower, the Bush administration has advocated a martial unilateralism. Under Bush, the White House has shunned not only many traditional U.S. allies but even, at times, its own State Department. Implacable enemies, it has decided, are better persuaded by force than by diplomatic overtures or economic blandishments. After all, Bush's proponents point out, it was fear, not love for the United States, that drove Libya to abandon its nuclear weapons program in the wake of the Iraq War.

With American prestige at an all-time low around the world, Bush's tough talk has alienated not just America's allies but also many of its voters. Kerry's emphasis on multilateralism and diplomacy appeals strongly to a Democratic base that's turned off by the Bush administration's go-it-alone, dead-or-alive, bring-it-on swagger. It should also draw swing voters unhappy with American conduct in Iraq.

If elected, however, a Kerry administration would have to offer more than soothing words and repaired alliances. Beyond the war in Iraq, the great challenge to U.S. security is terrorism. And terrorism on today's scale is a qualitatively different problem than those that faced Cold War diplomats of Kerry's father's time. It offers no negotiating partners, and its roots are intertwined with economic, geopolitical, and cultural issues on a grand scale. A change of adminis-

tration would help restore some global goodwill toward the United States, and that alone would be a boon to American security. But much more would depend on that administration's creativity and savvy. Kerry's gamble—and ours—would be that policies based on diplomacy can deflate the terrorist threat. But that's far from a sure bet.

IN DECLARING WAR ON TERRORISM, THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION proceeded from a faulty assumption: that terrorism was a state-based problem. If only that were so. Then the threat of U.S. force would be sufficient to discipline those states that harbor or support terrorists, and that would solve, or at least substantially address, the problem. But terrorism is a multiheaded monster that crosses borders, melts into populations without the knowledge or consent of governments, and requires relatively little by way of infrastructure.

What it does require, however, is a base of antipathy toward the United States and sympathy for terrorist causes and tactics. The latest Pew Research Center poll of global attitudes finds pervasive support in Muslim countries for suicide bombings in both Israel and Iraq. The poll also found that Osama bin Laden is viewed favorably by 65 percent of Pakistanis, 55 percent of Jordanians, and 45 percent of Moroccans. Some of these respondents are potential terrorist recruits; more of them simply comprise the social milieu within which violent groups can operate with tacit sympathy, sometimes with material support, and without exposure. The war on terrorism really is a battle for what has been called, with a bitter resonance John Kerry surely appreciates, the "hearts and minds" of that larger population, which can choose either to nurture or to eject violent extremists. A smart, forward-thinking counterterrorism policy would recognize that because terrorists are nonstate actors, and terrorism a nonstate problem, traditional diplomacy also would not work. It would aim its diplomacy at people rather than states.

This kind of diplomacy is known as "public diplomacy." It is obviously not an approach that would work with the zealots and violent extremists. But when it comes to swaying larger populations and shifting public attitudes, U.S. policy-makers can and must make real inroads.

Terrorism experts like Harvard's Jessica Stern, author of *Terror in the Name of God*, and Richard J. Chasdi, an adjunct

professor at Wayne State University's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies and the author of two studies of Middle East terrorism, point to economic and educational deprivation and lagging modernization in much of the Arab world as conditions that encourage aggression. They recommend building and equipping schools, roads, and hospitals. Such "positive sanctions," as Chasdi terms them, could help peel the pragmatists away from the extremists. Stern suggests "taking a lesson from the Saudis," who have stepped into communities that lack schools and offered them madrassas. Similarly, Stern notes that terrorist organizations have ingratiated themselves with communities by offering social-welfare services not provided by the state. The United States should follow close behind, Stern suggests, offering parents an alternative to Wahhabist indoctrination. U.S.-financed schools would not be ideological; they would simply offer basic education and skills training, which are desperately needed and would keep students out of the madrassas.

This kind of aid works at a grass-roots level. It is distinct from the sort that involves writing checks to corrupt and hated governments for infrastructural projects that are rarely credited to U.S. funding. A sobering anecdote in the October report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, a congressionally mandated, bi-

franchisement. Repressive states in the Middle East, from the grim autocracies of Syria and Saudi Arabia to the somewhat more relaxed autocracies of Jordan and Kuwait, are run by nearly unchallenged executives; these states may hold elections, but they are rarely free and fair, and though they may have parliaments, the parliaments normally wield little real power. Such governments tolerate few or no opposition parties, offer few if any freedoms of the press or of association, and frequently trammel basic human rights stipulated under international law. That repressive states should breed groups that channel frustrated political energies into violence is predictable.

The neoconservative solution to this problem began with the invasion of Iraq, which was to touch off a reverse domino effect of liberalization. But rather than cleanly implanting a liberal democracy in Iraq, the U.S. invasion has so far produced a foreign occupation beset with chaos and violence—a rallying point not for restive democrats in neighboring states but for restive anti-American extremists. A Kerry administration that based its foreign policy on diplomacy rather than force would take a very different approach to democracy promotion in the Middle East. The Bush administration selected the weakest, most hostile, and most autocratic Arab state—and then invaded it. A

## **Instead of invading the most hostile Arab state, as Bush did, a Kerry administration should select the friendliest, most liberal Arab states and nudge them toward reform.**

partisan panel, indicates that the United States has failed in the past to effectively leverage even its most generous assistance programs. "Egypt is the second-largest recipient of U.S. assistance in the world," the report states. "We were told repeatedly during our visit to Cairo that Egyptians were grateful to the Japanese for building their opera house. But they were unaware that the United States funded the Cairo sewer, drinking water, and electrical systems and played a key role in reducing infant mortality in Egypt. Whether aware of extensive American aid or not, Egyptians, by a wide margin, hold unfavorable opinions of the United States. A survey in 2002, for example, found that only 6 percent of Egyptians had a favorable view of America."

Among the lessons to be taken from this experience is that it matters not just that the United States provide aid, but how, to whom, and under what conditions it does so. Louise Richardson, the executive dean of the Radcliffe Institute and a scholar of national-security and terrorist movements, suggests that if we provide aid to autocratic Arab and Muslim states, we must also insist on getting something in return—namely, liberal reforms, or the direct alleviation of material conditions within the country. "If, in the name of stability, we are handing aid to corrupt leaders who violate the values we say we stand for," says Richardson, "how do we persuade people that we are being honest when we call for democracy and human rights?"

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS RIGHTLY LINKED THE appeal of terrorism in the Arab world to political disen-

Kerry administration should do the exact opposite. It should select the most stable, friendliest, and most liberal Arab states and nudge them down the path of constitutional and legal reform.

The complexity of reform in the Arab world cannot be overestimated. Because in most of these countries civil society is underdeveloped or co-opted by the state, a sudden democratic opening would likely empower Islamists, who have the only grass-roots infrastructure available. But Islamists advocate a decidedly illiberal vision, religious law that would in most cases explicitly curtail the rights of minorities and women. So in many Arab states, those who advocate human rights side with autocratic governments that clamp down on all opposition rather than support the Islamists' call for democratic opening. The result is frequently a suspension of both rights and popular political participation.

That's why, in a paper for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the scholar Daniel Brumberg suggests starting with states like Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and Morocco, which have relatively small populations, reasonably developed economies, and some degree of associational life. These countries could withstand a significant push, writes Brumberg, toward "party development, educational reforms, promoting the rule of law, and pressing for constitutionally mandated organizations to protect human rights." Larger, less stable states like Egypt should be pressed toward more incremental reform. The key to advancing such an agenda clearly lies not in the threat of invasion but in the effective use of U.S. soft power and diplomacy.



IN AN AGE OF TERRORISM OF THE SCALE AND REACH OF al-Qaeda, some problems are relatively new and require innovative solutions. Others are just as susceptible to traditional diplomacy as they ever were, and for that, John Kerry offers an obvious and immediate advantage over the current administration.

Counterterrorism experts agree that U.S.-mediated movement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would alleviate a good deal of tension. The Bush administration has inflamed resentment over that issue as never before. "The United States has never supported the Likud [Party] view," notes Ivo H. Daalder, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. "But this president has." Only a new administration would have the credibility and the flexibility to bring the United States back to the negotiating table as anything close to an honest broker. Not that the Palestinian question is the root cause of terrorism, cautions Stern, "but it's a very important symbolic asset to recruitment," and making progress on it "will make the terrorists' job harder."

Even more obvious is the need to repair America's traditional alliances, which most foreign-policy experts believe our allies would like very much to see renewed. A trans-Atlantic rift serves no one. We need the western Europeans' help in gathering intelligence, infiltrating terrorist groups, and restricting terrorists' movements. And while western European countries have not withheld such cooperation in the war on terrorism, the damage to American standing has produced an appearance of fragmentation just when we most need a united front. Popular European hostility to the United States under Bush has also contributed to a global climate of anti-Americanism and instability. "It doesn't help our legitimacy if we are perceived as arrogant by those whose help we need," says Stern.

A Kerry administration could quickly reverse the course of the trans-Atlantic rift by reaching out to allies and forging a foreign policy that treats them respectfully as partners. Says Daalder, "The No. 1 strategic requirement is for the United States to reassert its moral authority in the world. And that will require a change in administration. This administration's style is a substance all on its own. It's not just what the president has done but how he's done it." Perhaps the most striking finding in the Pew polling is the extent to which American public opinion is out of sync with that of the rest of the world. Eighty-four percent of Americans think that post-Saddam Hussein Iraq will ultimately be better off, compared with 67 percent of French and 41 percent of Turks. And 13 percent of Americans say that the United States is overreacting to terrorism, while 57 percent of French and 49 percent of Germans believe we are. Being out of sync doesn't mean we're wrong. But it does mean that the United States is neither communicating the rationale for its policies

to the rest of the world nor understanding how these policies are viewed by others. The Bush administration has overvalued toughness and resolve, to the point where it has become all but impossible to look squarely at the way the world sees the United States and to respond with policies that take this reality into account.

To be the world's lone superpower is a dangerous thing. There will always be people who hate the United States, whether out of resentment or because they feel threatened by U.S. military, cultural, or political domination. And the more the United States flaunts its ability to throw its weight around unrestrained, the more others will feel threatened by it. Neoconservatives gambled that a world that feared us would rush to have the United States for a friend rather than an enemy. Academic realists, like the



**Backlash:** Bush's war on terrorism has bred even more anti-Americanism.

University of Chicago's John Mearsheimer, have long cautioned that a world that felt threatened was just as likely to seek to counterbalance U.S. power, whether by seeking to attain nuclear weapons (Iran), devising an independent, countervailing foreign policy (Europe), or unleashing violence against us (terrorist groups).

What's been called the "unipolar moment" is a perilous one for the United States. The Bush administration has seized it, with arrogance and disregard for world opinion, on the presumption that we did not need to persuade others so long as we outstripped them in strength. But the chaos in Iraq and the rise of global anti-Americanism, particularly in the very region from which our enemy draws its recruits, suggest otherwise.

The time is ripe for an administration that is ready to negotiate with the world rather than impose its will as it pleases. That's a requirement best met by a president who values diplomacy—both the good old-fashioned kind and the kind that takes into account the new challenges of a new era. ■

# UNITEHERE!



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**We Are the Children:** Bush with Ugandan youths, June 2003. A condom program that has produced positive results in their country is threatened.

# Promises, Promises

**Big talk aside, Bush's go-it-alone global AIDS strategy is hurting more than it's helping.**

**BY ERIKA CASRIEL**

AT THE JUNE 2003 G8 SUMMIT IN EVIAN, FRANCE, PRESIDENT George W. Bush met with the other heads of state at a private dinner. There, according to sources close to two dinner guests, he promised the Europeans that if they gave \$1 billion to a new joint AIDS fund, he would match it. But by July, Bush was urging Congress to supply no more than \$200 million for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. "I think everybody felt fooled," says a Global Fund official.

Ultimately, Congress rebelled, increasing the U.S. contribution to the Global Fund to \$547 million, but Bush has again budgeted only \$200 million for the Global Fund in 2005. The president fails to mention these skirmishes when he claims that his administration is leading the world in the war on AIDS.

While it's true that the United States is contributing more than any other single country, the president has repeatedly overstated the U.S. financial commitment. Moreover, he has damaged the U.S. alliance with international agencies fighting AIDS. Rather than join the world's AIDS battle plan—with the Global Fund as financier and monitor, the World

Health Organization as technical adviser, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) as coordinator—Bush has created his own controversial strategy with a separate set of rules for his 15 recipient countries. "At this point, the Bush plan is hurting more than it's helping," says Paul Zeitz, director of the Global AIDS Alliance, an advocacy group.

Bush announced that program, known as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), in his 2003 State of the Union address, when he promised a \$15 billion, five-year mission to combat AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean. In a May 2003 ceremony with African ambassadors at the U.S. State Department, Bush signed a bill authorizing \$3 billion in spending for the first year; during his July 2003 trip to Africa, the president spoke of the coming "\$15 billion." His African audiences assumed that \$3 billion would be sent in the first year, but the 2004 budget to fight global AIDS amounted to only \$2 billion. With the price of AIDS drugs dropping, the billion-dollar shortfall translates into thousands of untreated AIDS patients.

The first round of PEPFAR funding wasn't distributed until February of this year; recipients included Save the Children and Harvard and Columbia universities. The plan covers 12 countries in Africa, two in the Caribbean, and Vietnam. AIDS experts applaud Randall Tobias, who was confirmed last fall in the new State Department post of global AIDS coordinator, for sending U.S. money out quickly after he got it. But they question whether PEPFAR will meet even its first-year goal of putting 201,000 people on anti-retroviral drugs.

"Many [African] health ministers are worried," says Celina Schocken, adviser to the HIV/AIDS minister of Rwanda, "that the first assessments will show very little progress in getting people on treatment." In May, the Council on Foreign Relations, a nonpartisan group, and the Milbank Memorial Fund, a nonpartisan health-policy foundation, published a report warning that PEPFAR is underfunded and doesn't emphasize local public-health systems, so that "five years from now ... PEPFAR investment into programs directed to HIV/AIDS may fail to achieve its goals."

Bush's unwillingness to contribute fully both to his own program and to international efforts is consistent with his record: According to a 1999 Salon story, while in Texas, Bush was the only governor who did not participate in a campaign by the nonprofit organization Children Uniting Nations, which seeks to help Africans suffering from AIDS. Then, in March 2002, retiring Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina called for \$500 million to be disbursed that summer for drugs to help HIV-positive pregnant women in Africa avoid transmitting the virus to their babies. That summer, while Helms was in and out of the hospital, the White House negotiated the emergency AIDS funding from \$500 million down to \$200 million, which Congress approved. But Bush declined to release that money, announcing that he would instead request funding—in future fiscal years—for the prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child. As of this March, the United States had contracted out only \$134 million for that program.

In January 2003, Bush finally called the AIDS epidemic an emergency, but it would be 13 months until \$350 million was released. "Four and a half million people have died since Bush's announcement, and 10 million have died since he became president," says Paul Zeitz. "And in that time the U.S. has gotten about 1,000 people on treatment."

BUT THE FUNDING SHORTCOMINGS AND SLOW RESPONSE are only part of the problem: Another obstacle, as with nearly every other global effort, is the Bush administration's insistence on working alone. In the case of AIDS, Bush has kept his distance from the Global Fund and leading AIDS agencies because they promote a "bottom-up" approach, meaning local stakeholders—including government, businesses, and community groups—meet and develop a plan to scale up their country's public-health system. The White House, on the other hand, is trying to create an AIDS program that is managed from inside the Beltway. And the reason for that is almost entirely ideological. When it comes to how to prevent

and treat AIDS, Bush's positions are driven by the "pro-family" agenda of the American right, putting the White House and the global AIDS community into open debate.

To begin with, international agencies and the U.S. government can't even agree on whether condoms are essential to preventing the spread of AIDS. Speaking at a recent dinner in Berlin sponsored by the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tobias reflected the White House view when he said, "Statistics show that condoms really have not been very effective," adding that "it's been the principal prevention device for the last 20 years, and I think one needs only to look at what's happening with the infection rates in the world to recognize that has not been working." Under PEPFAR, condoms will be distributed only to unspecified "high-risk" groups.

But public-health experts counter that the rise of HIV is not a consequence of the focus on condoms, but rather of inadequate government attention to HIV prevention more generally. In the 1990s, Uganda was able to limit the spread of HIV through an intensive "ABC" campaign asking people to "Abstain, Be faithful, or use Condoms." While Bush officials point to Uganda's "A" as a model for other African programs, studies of Uganda's success—most recently in the April 30 issue of *Science* magazine—have shown that increased condom use in Uganda, in conjunction with a measured reduction in sexual partners, or "zero-grazing," as it was called, helped reduce the number of infections there.

Dr. Philippe Talavera, head of Obetja Yehinga, a public-health education campaign in Namibia, expects to see his group's U.S. funding (which had begun before PEPFAR) cut or eliminated because it brings up condom use with young people. "We were told that the money was to be subject to conditions," he wrote in an e-mail in response to questions for this article. "Condoms were to be promoted only with the high-risk groups (military, truck drivers, sex workers, drug addicts). This definition might work in the [United] States, but in a country where the prevalence is 22.5 [percent], everybody engaging in sexual activities has to be considered at risk."

Jodi Jacobson, executive director of the Center for Health and Gender Equity, a reproductive- and sexual-health group, says that U.S. officials and grant recipients "have told us that in three separate U.S. missions [in Africa], people are being told not to include any requests for condoms in their ... operational strategies."

Another issue that splits the White House from the AIDS-relief community is abortion. Soon after his inauguration, Bush reinstated the "Mexico City Policy," also known as the global gag rule, which had been in effect under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush Senior. Under these restrictions, foreign nongovernmental organizations receiving U.S. government funding must agree not to provide counseling or referral for abortion or perform abortions except in cases of rape, incest, or life-threatening illness. This policy has impeded the fight against AIDS by forcing the closure of many clinics. For example, the Kenya affiliate of Marie Stopes International, a reproductive-health-services group, had to shut down several clinics, including one that served

**Bush's positions,  
driven by the right,  
have put the White  
House and global  
advocates at odds.**



400 women a month in the province with the highest HIV prevalence rate in the country. In Ghana, the Planned Parenthood Association was forced to reduce not only family-planning services but also voluntary HIV testing and counseling for nearly 700,000 clients.

Bush's "pro-family" agenda is clear in his approach to grant giving as well. The United States is expected to invest about \$180 million in abstinence-only-until-marriage programs—which don't discuss condoms or other forms of contraception—through PEPFAR in 2005. What's more, the Bush administration appears to be encouraging evangelical groups with no Africa experience to seek grants. In a conference with applicants, Dr. Anne Peterson, an administrator at the U.S. Agency for International Development, said that a "new partners' fund" has been set aside "for groups who've not ever worked with the U.S. government." According to a source close to the White House, this fund is intended to help American faith-based organizations seeking PEPFAR money. Bush has met with religious leaders at the White House about the HIV-prevention campaign in Africa, and Tobias was the keynote speaker at a conference in November on PEPFAR and faith-based initiatives. At an earlier, similar meeting of Christian groups, Senator Rick Santorum said in a speech, "I, again, want to call on you to take advantage of this funding opportunity."

This emphasis on faith-based organizations has resulted in the exclusion of nonsectarian groups like the African Services Committee, which runs an HIV-testing center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and sends outreach workers to urban outdoor markets. U.S. officials have praised the project, but when the committee tried to get U.S. financial help, the same officials were unresponsive. Kim Nichols, co-executive director of the African Services Committee, says, "[Faith-based organizations] seem to be getting all the attention."

The final point of tension between the administration and international public-health agencies is generic AIDS drugs. For three years, AIDS doctors in India and Africa have prescribed a single pill that contains three generic versions of brand-name anti-retroviral drugs. This allows AIDS patients to take two pills a day instead of six. "We know that patient convenience is one of the key factors in HIV/AIDS management," notes Dr. Jaideep Gogtay, chief medical adviser of the Indian company Cipla, one of two firms that produces these pills. (Cipla supplies the United States with a variety of generic drugs, but not anti-retrovirals, which are still under patent here.)

The generic, two-pill-a-day regime has proven to be as successful as brand-name drugs in clinical outcomes in current programs; the World Health Organization has sanctioned the drugs through a formal prequalification process; the Global Fund permits the purchase of World Health Organization-approved drugs; and they are licensed by the regulatory authorities of many countries in Africa that are already using them. They cost between \$140 and \$270 per patient per year, as compared with a discounted brand-name triple-combination course of treatment, which costs more than \$500 per year, according to Doctors Without Borders.

But one of Tobias' first actions was to begin questioning the safety of the generic drugs. Then he made clear that PEPFAR funds could not be used to purchase them. "Maybe these drugs are safe and effective," he told a group of African jour-

nalists. "Maybe they aren't. Nobody really knows." PEPFAR grantees have thus been delayed in buying the generics. Faced with global outcry, including protest letters from African health ministers and bipartisan pressure from Congress, Tobias—a former CEO of the drug company Eli Lilly—announced in May that the Food and Drug Administration would institute an expedited drug-review process for the drugs in question. But it's still unclear how much time these reviews will take.

"If [the Bush administration] were operating in good faith, they would try to strengthen the [World Health Organization] process and engage in technical discussions with [the World Health Organization] on developing the combinations we so desperately need, like pediatric formulations," says Rachel Cohen, U.S. director of Doctors Without Borders' Campaign for Essential Medicines. Instead, she says, they're seeking "to deny that these drugs meet international standards, because they don't want to set a precedent of using U.S. government money to finance medicines that are still on patent in the U.S." In addition, the U.S. trade representative's office is negotiating trade deals with poor countries that would impede them from quickly dispensing generic AIDS drugs.

THERE'S ONE OTHER STEP BUSH COULD TAKE IF HE WAS serious about fighting AIDS in Africa: Press for debt relief. Even Africa's creditors agree that debtor governments spend more money on hospitals and schools when offered debt cancellation: An International Monetary Fund fact sheet issued in April about 27 countries that have received partial debt relief reports that they "have increased markedly their expenditures on health, education and other social services."

In the case of Iraq, Bush has dispatched former Secretary of State James Baker as a special envoy on debt, and Baker is negotiating with foreign governments to waive 90 percent of Iraq's debt. But Bush has not even implemented the provision in his own AIDS law that would provide partial debt relief to African nations.

And so the situation remains bleak for AIDS workers in Africa, where an estimated 25 million people—out of a total of 38 million worldwide—are infected with HIV. Dr. Peter Mugenyi was prominently seated next to first lady Laura Bush at last year's State of the Union address to applaud the president's stunning \$15 billion announcement. Mugenyi is now using a PEPFAR grant to the Joint Clinical Research Center of Uganda to provide free treatment to HIV-positive AIDS orphans. "We are very happy that we have sufficient money to be able to treat all of these kids without having to choose among them," says Mugenyi.

But, as in the other PEPFAR countries, the vast majority of people in immediate need of AIDS drugs will go untreated. In Uganda, 150,000 to 200,000 people will not have access to the medicine they need, Mugenyi says. "The expectation is very high that the drugs are coming," he notes carefully, "and we are hopeful that we are not going to disappoint them when they eventually find out that the drugs are not enough to go around." ■

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ERIKA CASRIEL *has reported on Bush-administration policies for Rolling Stone and Out.*

# Follow the (Saudi) Money

Can a small Muslim community in Cambodia resist being pulled toward Wahhabism?

BY NOY THRUPKAEW

HEAD NORTH OUT OF PHNOM PENH, AND WITHIN A FEW miles the cacophonous traffic of Cambodia's capital gives way to herds of oxen and water buffalo, their shoulder blades rolling underneath their hides. As you travel, the riverside restaurants—frequented by well-off Khmers and thick with neon lights and the sound of karaoke—grow fewer and farther. Soon there is nothing but rice fields, the great brown swath of the Mekong River; and then, rising out of the flat landscape with surprising suddenness, an onion-shaped dome.

The dome crowns the al-Mukara Islamic School, home to more than 500 Cambodian Muslim students before a police raid in May 2003 sent the children streaming out of the gates with their hastily packed luggage. Three foreign-born men affiliated with the school and the Saudi charity that ran the institution were arrested; a Cambodian teacher at another Islamic school was detained a few weeks later. All were charged with “international terrorism with links to Jemaah Islamiyah,” the Southeast Asian arm of al-Qaeda that was behind the October 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia, which killed more than 200. Shortly after the raid, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen told the public that the arrests were “like taking a bomb out of our house. [Jemaah Islamiyah] are too dangerous.”

The case has put an uncomfortable spotlight on the predominantly Buddhist country's Cham community, which makes up about 6 percent of Cambodia's population and has its own language and culture, plus a religion—Islam—distinct from the rest of Cambodia. Many Cham dispute the claim that the school had links to international terrorism. “The Cambodian government wanted to have credit with Americans, that they are fighting terrorists,” said Ahmed Yahya, a parliamentarian and one of the country's most senior Muslim politicians. “The whole thing became very dark. ... It made the people here very unhappy.”

Nonetheless, there may be reasons to believe that the raid on the school was more than pandering to America. There is a significant flow of aid from the Persian Gulf states and Malaysia to Cambodia's Muslim population. U.S. and Cambodian officials have alleged that some of the aid—ostensibly designed to help fellow Muslims recover from the decimation of the Khmer Rouge years in the 1970s—is accompanied by radical proselytizing and recruiting drives that have brought unsuspecting Cambodians to training camps in Afghanistan. Officials and scholars have also expressed alarm at an influx of alleged international terrorists posing as aid workers who are eager to exploit the country as a back office

for their operations. According to Zachary Abuza, professor of international politics at Simmons College, with its porous borders, a thriving money-laundering and drug trade, and poor law enforcement, Cambodia would make an ideal place to set up terrorist shop.

HOW DID POVERTY-STRICKEN CAMBODIA AND ITS MUSLIM population of 700,000 find itself enmeshed in the international war on terrorism? Some scholars point back to the Khmer Rouge years, which left the devastated country reliant on outside aid, Islamic and otherwise.

In 1975, dictator Pol Pot's ultra-Maoist movement seized control of the country and attempted to transform it into an agrarian utopia. Some 1.7 million Cambodians died from disease, overwork, starvation, and execution during the regime's rule—among them at least half of the country's Cham population. Some historians have argued that the Cham faced especially harsh policies because their strong religious and ethnic affiliations were threatening to the regime and because they had staged several bloody rebellions against the movement. According to some accounts, the regime had deliberate plans to exterminate the Cham. The Khmer Rouge cadres desecrated mosques by turning them into pigsties or prisons, forced Chams to eat pork, and forbade prayer and the use of the Cham language. Historical documents were destroyed, and elders and religious figures killed. Ysa Osman, the Cham author of *Oukoubah*, a book about the treatment of Cambodian Muslims during the Khmer Rouge years, learned the fate of his village's older and infirm inhabitants only after he and other survivors returned in 1979 and looked in the well. “It was full of bones,” said Ysa. Among them were the remains of Ysa's grandparents. “It is hard to tell you what I lost,” he says. “Everything that I had before, I lost.”

Shortly after the Khmer Rouge was deposed in 1979, some Cham began to make connections with the outside Islamic community. The largest influx of aid began during the United Nations' nation-building efforts in 1992 and 1993. A number of those peacekeepers and aid workers were from Muslim countries, and after Cambodia held its first elections in 1993, money from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Malaysia began flowing into Cham communities to sponsor pilgrimages to Mecca, build mosques and Islamic schools, and provide other religious and social services. According to Bjørn Blongsli, a Norwegian anthropologist who specializes in Cham issues, Cambodia had 122 mosques and 300 Islamic





**School's Out:** In May 2003, Cambodian authorities shuttered an Islamic school in a Cham village because of suspected terrorist links.

schools in 1970. After the Khmer Rouge period, the number of mosques dropped to five. Now the country is home to at least 269 mosques and 400 Koranic schools.

This Islamic giving wasn't unique to Cambodia. Oil revenues had given the Persian Gulf states the means to fund projects around the world. Saudi Arabia gave particularly generously, seeking to counterbalance the success of Iran's Shia revolution, according to experts at the conservative Center for Security Policy. Between 1975 and 2002, Saudi Arabia spent \$70 billion in overseas aid, building 1,500 mosques, 210 Islamic centers, 202 colleges, and almost 2,000 schools in non-Islamic countries.

While the majority of that aid goes toward providing legitimate, no-strings-attached social services, experts say that a number of Saudi Arabia's quasi-state-run charities bring in clerics that preach Wahhabism, Saudi Arabia's austere, fundamentalist form of Islam. Even more disturbing, some of the projects serve as support networks and cash conduits for global terrorist jihadist movements. In 1994, Saudi nationals gave some \$150 million to Islamic charities in Bosnia, many of which were implicated in terrorism, according to a CIA document; in September 2002, Canadian intelligence indicated that Saudi charities were still supplying al-Qaeda with between \$1 million and \$2 million a month. U.S. Department of Treasury general counsel David Aufhauser later testified before a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security that Saudi Arabia is "in many cases ... the epicenter" of terrorist financing.

Among the Saudi charities was one that showed up in Cambodia: the al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, which allegedly has laundered money to al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia

and whose offices in at least 11 countries have been designated by the U.S. Treasury and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as supporters of terrorism. According to a former U.S. official who spoke under the condition of anonymity, al-Haramain operated in Cambodia under a "dual agenda"—along with financial aid and humanitarian services, the organization brought in "personnel who did not seem to have connections to established humanitarian organizations, but who were instead linked to political Islam ... associated with terrorist or political activities." U.S. and Cambodian intelligence found that some of the aid workers had spent time in Afghan training camps or had been affiliated with extremist movements in Arab countries, according to the official. In 2000, the U.S. Embassy detected some surveillance of the compound by several of the individuals and found that staff of the Saudi-based Om al-Qura Foundation, which headed the now-shuttered al-Mukara Islamic School, had begun recruiting Cambodians. These Cambodians were told that they were being sent on pilgrimages to Mecca or to schools in Pakistan or Egypt, "but once they left Cambodia, they were put into training camps," the official said.

The alleged terrorists may also have been drawn to the country as an attractive theater of logistical operations, according to the official and other scholars. One of the poorest countries in the world, Cambodia serves as a transit nation for amphetamines and heroin, has a cash-based, heavily dollarized economy, and "suffers from widespread corruption, including among officials at the highest levels of government," as the State Department's International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2003 notes. Cambodia also runs a brisk trade in small arms left over from the Khmer Rouge pe-

riod, sending them to international conflict zones including Sri Lanka. These conditions make Cambodia a convenient base from which to launder money, buy arms, forge documents, and perform any number of other tasks crucial to the smooth running of illegal activities, be they drug trafficking or planning terrorist attacks.

In addition, Cambodia's erratic control over its land and sea borders benefits potential terrorists who have used the country as a possible hideout. The porous borders also mean that Cambodian Muslims can easily be drawn into their neighbors' ongoing battles with Islamic insurgency and fundamentalism. This year, southern Thailand erupted with attacks on government schools and army outposts, allegedly led by Muslim separatists; in late April, more than 100 suspected Islamic insurgents died in bloody shootouts with Thai forces. The Thai media have implied that Cambodian students at Thai madrassas may have been involved in the attacks; other analysts connect the uprisings to Malaysian militants, who have a strong connection to the rising numbers of Cambodian adherents to Dakwah, an Islamic fundamentalist evangelical movement started in Malaysia.

But the most dangerous thing to pass through those porous borders may be fundamentalist ideology. As the U.S. official noted, al-Haramain and other "aid personnel" came to spread

in Orussei because of his supposedly incorrect Jahedi beliefs; Ongman was also told by "Malaysian police" that Jahedis should pray five times each day, instead of only on Friday, as is their custom. "They are trying to get us to buy someone else's history, and they take ours. That is buying a person," Ongman told Collins. "It is not in accord with the law of the Prophet. If we abandon our history for money, it is not right, and to do so shows a lack of self-worth."

Still, not everyone is resisting. According to Blengsli, the majority of Chams belong to the Shafi'iyah branch of Sunni Islam, but Wahhabi is now the next largest and most rapidly growing sect, comprising about 20 percent of the Cham population. Dakwah, a fundamentalist Islamic movement, has also made significant inroads in Cambodia. Blengsli estimates that a little less than 20 percent of the country's Muslims have converted to the orthodox Malaysian sect. Also known as al-Arqam, the evangelizing group was banned from Malaysia in 1994, where it was a key supporter of the Parti Islam SeMalaysia, an Islamic party that wants to institute Sharia law there. According to Muslim officials, nearly 80 Cham students a year study in Pakistani and Middle Eastern madrassas and approximately 400 a year go to Islamic schools in Malaysia. These students return home "filled with fire," Cham respondents told Blengsli.

**"They are trying to get us to buy someone else's history, and they take ours," says a leader of a minority Cham sect. "It is not in accord with the law of the Prophet."**

their own "very extreme and anti-modern form of Islam." That is particularly threatening to the Cham community, whose Islamic practices have traditionally been moderate and syncretic, reflecting their origins in the ancient, Hindu-influenced kingdom of Champa, located in what is now central Vietnam. Today, as the Cham struggle to rebuild their communities, fundamentalists and jihadists may have found a ripe target: an impoverished minority population in need of aid and a reconnection to Islam.

And the Islamists are not afraid to use their copious money as leverage. The Kuwaiti Committee of Association of Development of Islamic Culture in Southeast Asia operates with a clear "religious agenda" and is "particularly zealous in rooting out ... beliefs and practices which are regarded as non-Islamic," notes anthropologist William Collins in a report for the Phnom Penh-based Center for Advanced Study. He says it "will only give aid to communities, which, in its view, have achieved an acceptable level of religious punctiliousness."

The foreign clerics have clashed most often with members of the Jahed, a minority traditionalist Cham sect, whose faith reflects Shia and Sufi influences from early contact with Persians and Indians and who base more of their identity in preserving traditional Cham language, culture, and history than the majority of Chams. Their community is among the poorest of the Cham, at least in part because, in resisting Islamist pressures, they make themselves ineligible for much of the foreign aid coming in from the Muslim world. One Jahed leader named Ongman told Collins that he was denied aid to rebuild a community mosque by a Kuwaiti Arab worker

THERE IS ONE OTHER ELEMENT THAT MAY HELP PUSH THE Cham toward their fundamentalist brethren: the very government crackdown that was intended to protect them from terrorist infiltration. Back at the al-Mukara school, more than a year after the raid, villagers are still upset. Many find the government's claims against the school hard to believe. They point to the fact that the four suspects have been detained for longer than the six months allowed under Cambodia's constitution, and the fact that the government is now calling for assistance from U.S. intelligence to help make a case against the men. According to Hassan Kasem, a Cambodian Cham who immigrated to the United States, these local disturbances and the news of ongoing bloodshed in Iraq have raised doubts among Muslims in Cambodia about whether the war on terrorism is being fought justly in Cambodia and abroad.

The government account of the arrests goes like this: For more than a year beforehand, the Cambodian government had been working with the FBI on tracking the Cambodian office of the Saudi-based Om al-Qura Foundation, which headed the school, according to General Sok Phal, chief of Cambodia's intelligence and security agencies. Sok argues that the evidence was irrefutable: Money sent from Saudi Arabia to sustain the school was being used to conduct Jemaah Islamiyah support activities, like buying false passports and documents for suspected terrorists. Other intelligence sources indicated that the money was being disbursed to Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaeda through Om al-Qura channels—\$10,000 wire transfers would appear in the school's



Cambodian bank account on a monthly basis, only to disappear shortly thereafter.

Acting on this information, on May 28, 2003, Cambodian forces arrested an Egyptian and two Thai Muslims affiliated with al-Mukara. They then deported 28 al-Mukara teachers—from countries including Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Thailand, Yemen, and Egypt—along with their 22 dependents. On June 12, authorities apprehended a Cambodian, Sman Ismael, who had studied for three years at an Islamic school in southern Thailand, where he allegedly fell under the sway of the Dakwah sect. A fifth suspect remained at large, but was added to the list to be tried in absentia. They were accused of shuttling money from a Saudi-based foundation to Jemaah Islamiyah, procuring \$50,000 to launch strikes against U.S. interests in Cambodia, and planning a major offensive in advance of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meeting in June 2003, when 23 heads of state, including Colin Powell, gathered in Phnom Penh.

What happened next seemed to confirm the Cambodian government's suspicions, according to Sok. Information gleaned from detainees' interrogation sessions led to the August 11 arrest of Riduan Isamuddin, better known as Hambali, Osama bin Laden's chief operative in Southeast Asia. Hambali had lived in Cambodia from September 2002 to March 2003, and after his arrest in Thailand, he revealed Jemaah Islamiyah's intention to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh along with other Western targets throughout Southeast Asia, according to Sok. Also damning was the discovery that Sman Ismael had arranged for his sister to marry a man named Ibrahim, identified as one of Hambali's steadfast companions during Hambali's time in Cambodia. This move is in keeping with Jemaah Islamiyah tactics, according to an International Crisis Group report titled "Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia," which argues that educational systems and strategic marriages have become key tools in bolstering the group's membership and transmitting its jihadist ideology.

Still, Ahmed Yahya scoffs at the allegations. "They are 100-percent innocent," the opposition-party politician declares over the phone. The only thing they were guilty of was running an influential organization that drew the envy of the prime minister's party, Yahya says, and their carefully timed pre-ASEAN arrests were nothing more than politically expedient gestures of goodwill toward the U.S. war on terrorism. Yahya claims that only one of the detainees, a staff member at the al-Mukara school, ever knew of Hambali's terrorist intentions in Cambodia—and only accidentally. He says Hambali asked the al-Mukara staff member, named Azi, to hold on to a bag for him. When the Jemaah Islamiyah chief later asked Azi, a Thai, to send him money from the bag, Azi opened the luggage to discover several thousand dollars in cash along with three computer disks, one of which was labeled "Thai football." An avid sports fan, Azi ran the program on his computer and discovered that the disk contained diagrams and plans for explosives. Some time later, Hambali had a courier pick up the bag; Azi maintained his silence, says Yahya, out of fear.

Adding fuel to the Chams' doubts are international human-rights activists' concerns about the case's "irregularities," says Amnesty International's Daniel Alberman. "It's not

clear that the Cambodian judiciary had done their homework and found out that there were charges to be laid against these people." In August, Bunna Oun, a Phnom Penh municipal judge, admitted, "We are lacking a lot of evidence. We are requesting the Cambodian authorities and the U.S. to provide us with further documents on the motives that this group has a terrorist network in Cambodia." And the longer they sit in jail untried, the more agitated the local population is likely to become. "If these people are left to linger in detention, it effectively undermines the whole case," says David Wright-Neville, an Australian expert on Southeast Asian terrorism and a former Australian intelligence officer. "It raises doubts, quite legitimately, if [the arrests] are simply politically or religiously motivated."

The fact that a much-needed resource was closed down in the process doesn't help, either. "They shouldn't have shut down the whole school," Kob Saleh, the chief of the Muslim Chrouy Metrey village across the street from al-Mukara, told me when I visited the school in October 2003. "There's a lack of human resources in Cambodia, and that hurt a lot of children."

Playing into the anger, too, is ongoing distrust of Prime Minister Hun Sen's controversial government. "Cambodia is a place where surveillance groups are involved in doing the regime's bidding," says Wright-Neville. Rumors flew around Chrouy Metrey, the Muslim village across the street from the school, and among other Chams that the prime minister's party had only shut down the school in order to gain control over it later, or to seize the school's valuable land. The United States and Hun Sen, remarked a number of Cham interviewees, perhaps amount to just one strongman helping another.

The U.S. Embassy has embarked upon projects to counterbalance these perceptions. In 2003, it worked with Cham nonprofits to extend educational campaigns on "democracy and human rights" to Muslim communities, according to an embassy spokeswoman. The United States Agency for International Development also started programs to increase community participation in shaping local education systems, which will hopefully give Chams and other minorities a greater voice in shaping curricula and schools to suit their needs.

While the assistance has been met with enthusiasm among Cham communities, there is still a long way to go to convince Muslims of the righteousness of the war on terrorism. "In the last 10 or 20 years, the embassy ignored our people. But now they want to help us," says Yahya, wryly. "A war to win the hearts and minds."

In a way, the Americans are in a footrace with international Islamist groups, and officials wonder how long Cham communities can resist fundamentalist advances. "I can guarantee 100 percent that Cambodian Chams are not involved in terrorism now," Yahya told me by phone. But can he guarantee that Chams won't be drawn into fundamentalism in the future, with the temptations of aid and a worldwide brotherhood of Islam after years of isolation? Yahya pauses for a long time before answering. "No," he says finally. "I cannot." ■

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# Life After Theory

The romance with French thought that has dominated American humanities departments since 1966 is over. Can the left academy speak in a common political language again?

BY MARK GREIF ILLUSTRATIONS BY MCDAVID HENDERSON

NOT LONG AGO, I WATCHED A PANEL OF NOTED LITERARY scholars conclude a conference at Yale. The professors were just putting away their papers and wrapping up when, somehow, they started passionately debating the case of James Yee, the Guantanamo Bay chaplain accused of espionage. To explain the government's charges, they hauled out whatever lingering theory they still had available: Walter Benjamin's theories of translation from the 1920s and jargon drawn from the French theorist Alain Badiou. Things were going downhill. At this point, a noted political scientist stood up in the audience and proclaimed, "I would first like to clear up a few points of fact about Guantanamo Bay."

It was gratifying that a political scientist had shown up at a literary conclave. It was even more impressive that the literary types were eager to listen to her. The moment seemed somehow symbolic of a larger story that's been unfolding in the humanities for some time now. After years of apparent disengagement, the humanities are recovering a public mood. Professors seem more eager to talk about *The New York Times* front page than their own fields, even on the most public occasions. The shock of George W. Bush's election provoked a renewed interest in electoral politics. But a much more influential development in humanities departments than even Bush's ascent was something called the "end of theory" or "death of theory." It reduced humanities scholars' confidence in the autonomy of their disciplines, and it is leading some to reconsider their older obligations to public life.

Theory's moribundity has been discussed for at least five years in the academy. Now the news is starting to reach the popular world. In February, Terry Eagleton, the British Marxist responsible for a well-known 1980s undergraduate primer on theory, published *After Theory*—a book that tries to identify where things went wrong. Bruno Latour, the hero of constructivist history of science, had a speech excerpted at length this spring in *Harper's*, where it looked misleadingly like he was issuing a mea culpa. An outstanding journal of the age of high theory, *Critical Inquiry*, recently published a revealingly anxious symposium on "The Future of Criticism." And in France, the best intellectual history of this period of American intellectual life has just been published, as seen through bemused European eyes.

This is grounds for a lot of optimism, especially for readers outside the academy. The new topics on humanities agen-

das come back to themes many believe are the responsibility of academics to investigate. These include a return to the aesthetics of beauty, ideas of cosmopolitanism, literatures in neglected languages, and global culture. No one idea predominates. The academic landscape could become as open as it has been for decades. Most importantly, though, the end of theory could force academics to resume speaking a common political language with the broader public.

WHAT WAS THEORY, ANYWAY? IT WAS THE BEST AND worst, but certainly the most important, thing to happen to American intellectual life following the 1960s. Theory started as the transfer of French philosophy of the late '60s to the United States. It continued the cosmopolitan trend of our postwar intellectuals, who ever since 1945 had looked to a European tradition for inspiration.

Theory's origin is usually dated to a conference at Johns Hopkins in 1966, during which a range of French philosophers exposed their disagreements about the then-current "structuralism" in front of an American audience. Because the United States had provided a richer home for Freudianism, existentialism, and German émigré thought than could be found in those movements' countries of origin, it was natural that America should make room for a new philosophy of "poststructuralism." And after the tumult of 1968, this line of thought promised to help make sense of the mixed successes and failures of mainstream technocratic liberalism and the optimistic "liberation" of the radical left. The new French philosophy was supposed to provide a way of understanding political relations apart from a single "us-them" of a universal subject ("the proletariat," "Man") who was dominated by obvious oppressors ("bureaucracy," "capital," "machines").

But other trends of the 1960s had broken the lineage of public-minded, self-consciously native commentators, like the New York intellectuals, the liberal theologians, and the anti-Nazi émigrés. In the era of Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Herbert Marcuse, those thinkers had added their own important theories while interpreting foreign influences for a broad public. Later, intellectuals didn't reproduce themselves outside of universities—except, alas, among the nascent neoconservatives (as Irving Kristol led to William Kristol), or for rare specimens like Susan Sontag.

As the younger intellectual left found jobs inside the uni-

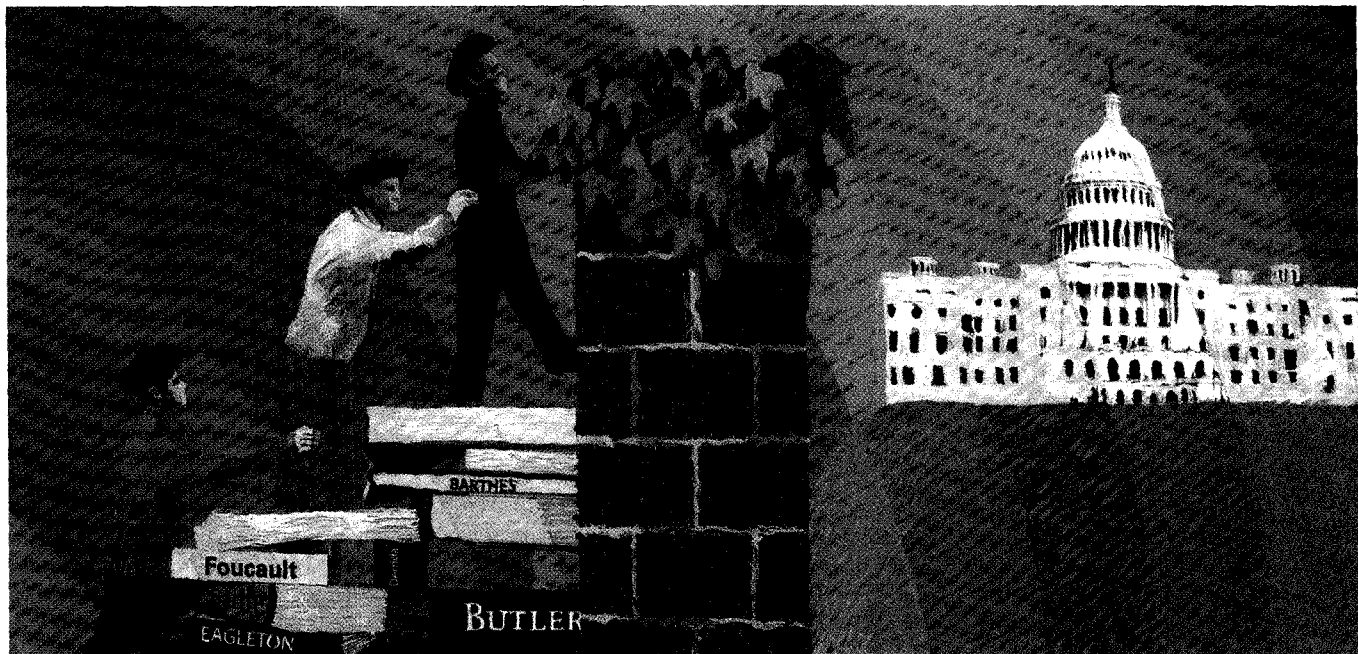


versities, the public sphere had to depend on gifted journalists (like Sontag's son, David Rieff) and a narrower layer of "policy intellectuals." The consequence was a power vacuum in the kind of holistic intellect that unites political commitments and practical goals with a whole vision of the good life. This vision was formerly associated with a combined commitment to politics and a critical eye for literature, art, and philosophy—the sort of dual talent exemplified by an Irving Howe or a Hannah Arendt. In the reduced climate, the new French master-thinkers achieved an exaggerated stature for a small population in universities, yet suffered an unfair isolation from the mainstream audiences that might have appreciated and corrected their real insights.

EAGLETON'S *AFTER THEORY* STARTS ITS STORY IN THE EARLY 1970s. His book isn't against theory in any way. It's against

everything. As a historical argument, this claim of Eagleton's includes a gigantic gap. The really big changes in theory occurred *between* the 1970s era of the French forefathers and the current decadence Eagleton ridicules. In fact, Eagleton played a crucial role in those changes. He was one of the American and English minor "academic superstars" who, in the 1980s, simplified and popularized theory to give it a home in literature departments. To give them credit, the superstars retrieved continental thought at a time when philosophy departments rejected it. They had political goals, even if their means were arcane. But most English majors weren't trained in the philosophical tradition, and professors who just wanted to teach *Jane Eyre* felt crowded out by strident pseudo-philosophers, hence the infamous "theory wars" of two decades.

Eagleton, who wrote the book on the practical application of theory to literature in his *Literary Theory: An Introduction*



what theory's disciples have made of a beautiful thing. Rather than see any complications within an original golden age, he blames the current generation for squandering a first generation's hard work. For his villain, or more for comic relief, Eagleton holds up the sort of contemporary graduate student who feels that "oppositional" culture is all that's necessary for politics and who writes his or her dissertation on "the politics of masturbation," "vampirism ... [or] cyborgs and porno movies." "Culture had been among other things a way of keeping radical politics warm, a continuation of it by other means," Eagleton writes. "Increasingly, however, it was to become a substitute for it."

In fact, Eagleton points out, the original age of theory developed out of the high era of Western European radicalism. Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Louis Althusser, and the *Tel Quel* group responded directly to political events. The same pens that signed petitions against Gaullism, war in Indochina, psychiatric coercion, and racism—and in support of gay liberation, women's liberation, and workers' autonomy—wrote *Discipline and Punish* and *Of Grammatology*.

In other words, once we were good, but the kids ruined

(1983), manages to ignore his own legacy. Instead of "literary theory," he now conspicuously calls the stuff "cultural theory." He evades a historical account of the American and English theory proselytizers of the 1980s—by far the most significant generation, if your goal is to explain how theory and politics came to have such a troubled relationship.

THE U.S. TRIUMPH OF THEORY IN THE 1980s IS USUALLY associated with a single name, and it isn't French. It's Ronald Reagan. According to the standard story, the "conservative revolution" forced a political retrenchment for leftists within American universities. Because the left had failed on class and power politics, "tenured radicals" developed a politics of identity. By the end of the decade, it had proven shrill and insular, leading to "speech codes" and "political correctness."

Of course, the left's turn to cultural politics in America had a longer and more dignified history than this, and it really did intersect with electoral politics. A certain disappointment emerged after 1968, when ideas of revolutionary ferment failed to produce governmental revolution and instead yielded Richard Nixon. That disappointment was confirmed

in 1972, as George McGovern's candidacy emerged as a chance for left intellectuals to actually run a campaign. It resulted in an overwhelming loss.

But on the side of culture, progressives had reason in the early 1970s to enjoy an expansionist mood. Feminists won the right to choose in *Roe v. Wade*, anti-racists saw triumphs of black consciousness alongside successful integration of northern institutions, and environmentalists won an Endangered Species Act. McGovern himself tilted the structure of the Democratic Party to be more responsive to minority groups. Against an illusory background of Democratic cohesion, culture produced real victories, at least through Jimmy Carter's presidency. Reagan's election was so crushing in part because it began to seem that in fact everything *apart* from culture had been lost overnight to an unsuspected revolutionary conservatism, which even claimed parts of the old Democratic base.

Looking back, university leftists' choice to concentrate ever more deeply on culture after this disaster may have been shortsighted. But it wasn't stupid. The transformation of 1970s high theory into a set of 1980s teaching strategies for undergraduates was a way of reaching the only audience to which the professorial left had complete access: the young people its members taught.

Richard Rorty has argued that the right and left in America parceled out education in a tacit settlement: Primary education went to the right, while the left held higher education. One cost was that both sides had to hide what they were doing in coded language. The right had "standards," and the left had a scholarly jargon of "theory." This settlement has lasted, however much Dinesh D'Souza and Roger Kimball tried to make a scandal out of a leftward bias in the humanities that should have been obvious to anyone. Theory was, in this sense, not just a piece of arcana but a form of popularization—a popularization directed at idealistic youths (and their teachers) rather than jaded adults. (It was not recognized as such, because it could be made *more* complex for young minds, not dumbed down—i.e., it required the sort of time, flexibility, and willingness to learn a new language that 19-year-olds possess and business-minded adults don't.) The only real power most academics have is in teaching, and they used it.

Twenty years later, it's tempting to say the movement miscarried, and that it was political suicide to make theory so central to the progressive hopes of the academy without somehow bringing it into the public discourse. Theory that undergraduates learned in college, whether deconstructive or semiotic or subaltern, lost its impact when students found on graduation that outside commentators didn't understand a word they were saying. Frankly, *The Wall Street Journal* could have learned a lot from Antonio Gramsci or Michel Foucault. But nobody blamed *The Wall Street Journal* for being ignorant. And the shotgun wedding between English classics and continental philosophy came to seem like a bad dream—or, worse, a colossal act of professorial bad faith. Acquaintances of mine, recalling papers they wrote during their college years, have a tendency to slap their foreheads.

COULD THINGS HAVE GONE DIFFERENTLY, ANYWAY? THE country to look to for an alternate intellectual trajectory, strangely enough, is France. Among American graduate students, there has always been the rumor that the French gave up on Foucault, Jacques Derrida, et al. a long time ago. The French were said to be baffled by our worship of kooks—not unlike our American attitude to the rumored French enthusiasm for Jerry Lewis. I'd never before heard this case made by the French themselves. But the independent intellectual historian François Cusset has finally made the whole 30-year saga known—in French—in a book that is a gossipy and yet superb history of what he calls the "*formidable* adventure ... of French intellectuals marginalized in France."

*French Theory* (the book is ironically packaged under an English title) suggests that the major French heroes of American theory, though well-known and widely read in France, came to be dismissed by the mid-1970s as far-out radical holdovers from the 1960s. If Cusset isn't exaggerating, French audiences now view our history the way we would view a discovery that, say, Susan Sontag, Norman O. Brown, and Noam Chomsky had become guiding lights of university life in Germany. French intellectual life, while we were just learning Foucault and Derrida, was turning to a new "civic humanism."

Starting in the years before 1980, young French thinkers like André Glucksmann and Bernard Henri-Levi went on the attack. The *nouveaux philosophes*, a group of successor intellectuals who turned away from the '60s, from French communism, from Maoism, and above all, from *révolution*, became the skilled journalists and polemicists that U.S. academics were ceasing to be. And they slammed their teachers. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut published a famous book denouncing America's theory-heroes as vestiges of "*pensée '68*," purveyors of a destructive anti-humanism.

A new politics emerged in France that valued humanitarianism and human rights in foreign affairs, and republicanism and universalism in domestic life. Taking into account the more openly leftist political landscape of France (where the center-left can still identify itself as socialist), the ideology of the new political intellectuals fell between our own liberal "public intellectuals," like Michael Ignatieff or Paul Berman, and philosophically trained neoconservatives, like Francis Fukuyama. Multiculturalism, identity politics, and queer theory remained mostly inconceivable in the French context, where pluralism or "diversity" are not always widely recognized as positive civic goals—down to the recent banning of headscarves, yarmulkes, and religious symbols in schools.

While their stock declined at home, Cusset reveals, the major French theorists we are familiar with were actually making long sojourns within the United States in the 1970s and '80s. The little University of California, San Diego hosted practically every French professor who was instrumental in the creation of theory in America. Foucault got into the gay nightlife of San Francisco while he taught at Berkeley. Gilles Deleuze loved surfing. Earlier foreign influences, like Sartre

**Ironically, the French intellectuals lionized by the American left were marginalized in their native country.**



and Theodor Adorno, had been anti-American, both temperamentally and politically. These newer writers' books had their greatest impact here—and then came to actually be *about* America, or so it seemed. Foucault's second volume of *The History of Sexuality*, ostensibly a study of ancient Greece and Rome, looked suspiciously like a description of California body culture, health, and dieting. Jean Baudrillard just wrote *America*.

Derrida, the theorist with the most disproportionately American following, had been a regular stateside visitor since a student exchange to Harvard in 1956. "Deconstruction" came into the general American vernacular as a kind of synonym for destruction—with the extra syllable signifying "destruction by academics." But in France, even a title like Woody Allen's *Deconstructing Harry* was unintelligible to a mass audience; the movie had to be released under a different name.

SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW? THERE'S SOME ATTRACTION TO a neo-Enlightenment turn for American progressives today similar to the turn the *nouveaux philosophes* made two decades ago. The aging German theorist Jürgen Habermas has been a figure for progressives to rally around for decades, but his cautious, temperate, exceedingly reasonable approach isn't the sort of thing to stir new ideas. One of the things that certainly could come after theory would be a renewed universalism for liberals, a reclaiming of the language of citizenship rather than identity. This chimes with two preoccupations this election year: the quest to bring those supposed "NASCAR dads" into the Democratic Party and the need to keep Republicans from getting a lock on the language of freedom and democracy during our supposed war on terrorism. France's new philosophers, with their civic humanism, really did participate in public life. Bernard Henri-Levy is still a preeminent voice in public discussions, echoing even across the Atlantic in his recent salvo, *Who Killed Daniel Pearl?* Luc Ferry, meanwhile, became education minister.

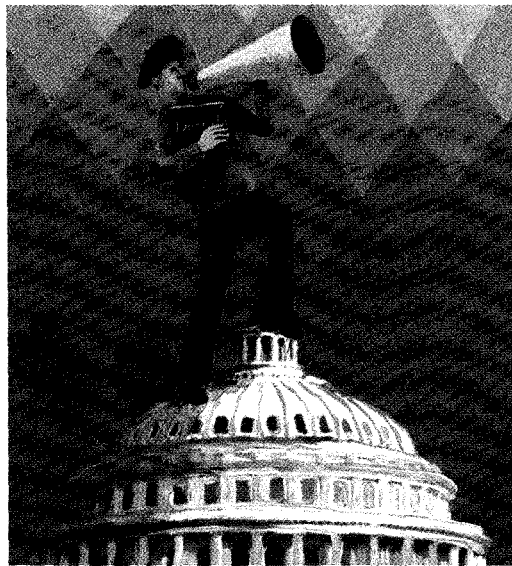
Theory has been the bad guy in rants from both right and left—against academics' pseudo-radicalism, their arcane languages, their identity politics and political correctness. But usually, professors are people you can rely on to have their hearts in the right place, even when you can't tell what they're saying. Unlike the myth of a liberal media, the conservative notion that most humanities professors are dyed-in-the-wool liberals (or something left of that) is probably true. It won't help bring academics back into practical liberal politics *as intellectuals* if the death of theory is just taken as the occasion for a collective sigh of relief, or, worse, a chorus of "I told you so" from people who didn't understand why theory was important in the first place. Ask famous professors to renounce theory and its ways and you get a lot of watery, trivial op-eds by Shakespeare scholars, who

too often pass for being public intellectuals. The questions should be, what can be preserved from the work the professors were doing all those years, and what is it wise to ask them to do now?

The truth is, we don't want academics doing the same things as everybody else. Creating a homogenous climate of opinion between policy-makers and abstract thinkers is bad for intellectual progress. It's also bad political strategy. As the success of the neoconservatives has shown, under the influence of Leo Strauss and some University of Chicago economists, political mobilization still needs original, grand theory.

American humanities departments, during the heyday of theory, really did keep some energies of 1960s utopianism alive. They infused an indigenous American pluralism into philosophy. The controversial identity theories, whatever their merits, were one thing high theorists couldn't have gotten from France or anywhere else; theories of ethnicity and difference bubbled up from the demographic changes and demands of an increasingly diverse American student population.

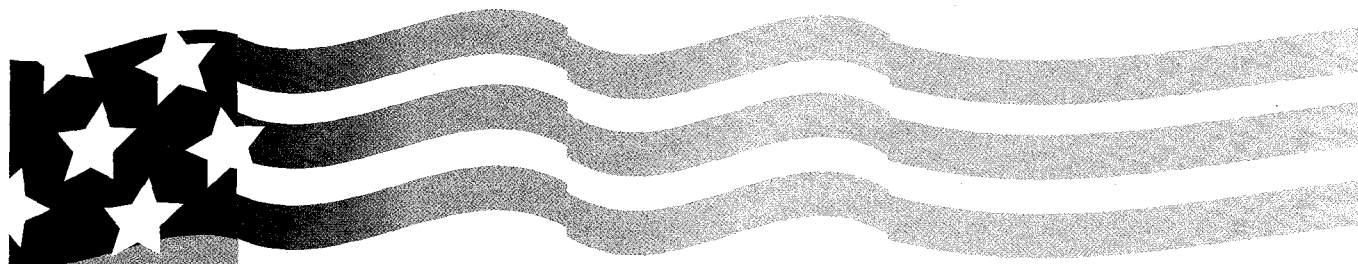
Humanities professors will offer something major again if we continue to let them fly into the upper reaches of thought. But we have to find out what they see up there, and have it explained—by somebody—in a clear and jargon-free way. The best thing that could occur in the present opening would really be institutional, and it has less to do with universities than you'd think. What we need most is the return of "linking intellectuals," who are not necessarily academics, who have the skills of public controversy, and yet whose sincere knowledge of academic



practice will make professors trust them—even when they have to tell professors they're making asses of themselves. And for these types of writers to survive, we need the sort of print institutions that aren't just op-ed pages and that can model what full-on intellectual debate would look like in a better public sphere. (*Lingua Franca* started to serve a similar function of professorial education in the 1990s, before that magazine's untimely demise. It filled its roster with talented renegades from graduate schools who had the genius to revive public-academic debate, if only anybody would publish it.)

The problem of theory was never the philosophy it drew on but the absence of a public forum to criticize it, expand it for intelligent adults, and correct it. The return of the linking intellectuals—adept in philosophical thought but not beholden to the academy—could restore a heritage of speaking to the public about the professors, and, more importantly, could get the professors speaking honestly and intelligibly to us. ■

MARK GREIF is a Prospect senior correspondent and co-editor of a new journal, *n+1* ([www.nplusonemag.com](http://www.nplusonemag.com)).



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# Currents

## BOOKS



... And Another Thing: Bill Clinton on his book tour, Washington, D.C., July 6

## Based on a True Story

MY LIFE BY BILL CLINTON • KNOPF • 957 PAGES • \$35.00

BY ALAN BRINKLEY

PRESIDENTIAL MEMOIRS ARE AMONG the worst of all literary genres. That is not because they are invariably self-serving and less than wholly honest. Even the greatest memoirs are both. It is because they are relentlessly inauthentic. One can read the memoirs of virtually every postwar president without learning anything of importance about the men who wrote them, even in those relatively rare instances when the man was actually the former president himself. Instead, the reader confronts what is, in effect, an official state document, vetted by many hands, care-

fully edited to offend no one and to reveal nothing of importance, written with a lofty, statesmanlike dullness. Unsurprisingly, historians writing about recent presidents make little use of their memoirs, and readers wanting to learn about the men also steer a wide path around these books.

But a small number of presidential memoirs are of value to students of the presidency. Richard Nixon's autobiography, reviled at the time of its publication as a dishonest cover-up, is actually among the most revealing books about this complicated president—a portrait

suffused with the tortured resentment, cloying self-pity, subtle evasiveness, and genuine intelligence that formed much of the essence of the man. Likewise, Bill Clinton's new memoir reveals a great deal about this driven, complex, frustrating, but irresistible figure, who ranks alongside John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan as one of our most compelling modern presidents.

*My Life* is a very long book, far longer than it needs to be. It is crammed with detail—much of it needless—about almost every aspect of Clinton's life, including portraits of countless people he has met and exhaustive, sometimes tedious discussions of the many policy issues that absorbed his attention as governor and president. Although often self-critical, it is also self-exculpatory. But whatever its flaws, this massive book has one indispensable virtue: It is authentically his. That is not just because Clinton wrote the book mostly himself (reportedly in longhand, on legal pads). It is also because he used the book to explain his career as he actually saw it, with all the sentimentality, anger, affection, frustration, pride, and at times relentless self-examination that make up his elusive character. Although parts of the book are dull, the memoir as a whole is a rewarding and revealing portrait of an endlessly fascinating man. Those who write histories of Clinton and his time—as many people, of course, will do—will find this memoir an essential starting point.

Although *My Life* may seem at first glance to be without clear structure or theme, three distinct stories thread their way through the narrative. One is the role of Clinton's early life in determining the mainsprings of his character. The second is his political career, as a candidate and as an elected official. And the third is the story of his encounters

with the many scandals that bedeviled his public life, from its beginning to its official end (at least until now). Many people will read this book with an interest only in the last of these stories, but Clinton makes clear how inextricably intertwined they all are.

### **UP FROM TROUBLE**

Clinton's father, Roger Blythe, died in an automobile accident several months before Bill was born. His mother—a gregarious, fun-loving woman who was seldom happier than when she was at the racetrack—worked for years as an anesthesiologist (in a time before doctors monopolized the field) to support her son. She married a charming scoundrel, Roger Clinton, had a second son, and weathered two decades of her husband's wild swings between alcoholic

to be popular and successful, and by the time he was in high school, he had succeeded—so much so that he began his political career as an energetic and ambitious member of Boys Nation (through which he won a trip to the White House and a now-famous photograph with Kennedy). He also developed enough confidence to dream of leaving Arkansas to attend Georgetown University in Washington, where he was not just a good student but a successful campus politician and an eager aide to his boyhood idol, Senator William Fulbright, whose recommendation helped him win a Rhodes Scholarship.

Clinton's account of his years at Oxford is entangled with his description of how he confronted the military draft, then at its Vietnam-era height. Anyone who recalls the 1992 New Hampshire

school summers; and one deep enough ultimately to persuade Hillary to follow Bill to Arkansas, giving up what would certainly have been a far more luminous career in law than she could hope to find in Little Rock. Whatever the difficulties this marriage and partnership faced over the years—and there were clearly many—neither of these remarkable people would have achieved alone what they have achieved together.

### **TURNING TO POLITICS**

Bill Clinton's electoral career—which began with an unsuccessful race in Arkansas in 1974 for the U.S. Congress and ended with his becoming the first Democrat elected to a second term as president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt—is a remarkable story. That Clinton began his public life in the mid-1970s, with the United States in the throes of its first serious economic difficulties since the Great Depression, profoundly shaped his outlook. That he began it in Arkansas, a poor state in which working people were paying a high price for the halting emergence of the new global economy, defined his politics as well.

Clinton sensed early how profoundly different the politics of the 1970s and '80s were from those of the heady, turbulent '60s. As a founder of the Democratic Leadership Council, he helped craft a strategy that he believed would permit the Democrats to recover from the loss of popular faith in postwar liberalism. He argued that the party must embrace the task of helping ordinary people weather economic change.

Out of this new political strategy came several important innovations. One was the emphasis on work—on the value of work to both the community and the individual, and on the importance of making work an attractive alternative to welfare and crime. Another was the belief that in the new economy, only those with education could hope to succeed. Still another was the commitment to fiscal discipline, both as a rejoinder to the Democratic Party's spendthrift image and as a strategy for making the U.S. economy competitive in the world.

The most important policy innovations of Clinton's presidency—some of them thwarted and some of them

## **That Clinton survived is testament to his political skills and his enemies' self-defeating excesses. But no one could argue now that he truly won the battle.**

abusiveness (he once fired a gun in her general direction during a fight) and penitent amends. Bill, who took his stepfather's name (perhaps as a way to prove his loyalty and affection), intervened to protect his mother more than once. Like many relatives of alcoholics, he learned to hide his family's problems and to disguise his own anguish behind a sunny, garrulous demeanor. Throughout his boyhood, he thrived on the affection he managed to elicit from friends, relatives, teachers, ministers—anyone who might validate his effort to prove that he was different from the man he called "Daddy" but whom he never fully accepted as a father. Clinton put up with his stepfather and even felt real affection for him. But he adored his mother and was fiercely loyal to his brother, Roger Jr., who weathered the family wars far less successfully than Bill did and ultimately served time in prison for dealing drugs.

Clinton describes his younger self as something of an outsider, separated from others by the secrets of his family and by his self-image as a large and somewhat awkward boy. But he worked hard

primary will recall the charges and countercharges that swirled around Clinton's first presidential race and nearly destroyed it. Clinton carefully describes his own conflicted views—his opposition to the war, his reluctance to risk his life for a cause he opposed, and his simultaneous doubts about the morality (and future political value) of his position. His anguished letters at the time to the National Guard commander who had offered him a position came back to haunt him two decades later, but he makes a persuasive case that his indecision and anguish were real.

The most important event of his youth was likely his encounter at Yale Law School with Hillary Rodham, whom he pursued for several years with a single-minded intensity that he usually reserved for politics. This is a familiar story, in part because Hillary Clinton tells it herself in her own memoirs. What is clear from these accounts is the deep attachment these two talented, ambitious young people developed—an attachment deep enough to draw Bill away from career and politics to follow Hillary to California during one of their law-



achieved—were almost all directed toward the advancement of these goals. The politically costly tax increases of his first year in office were critical to the fiscal stability and booming economic growth that won him re-election in 1996. The failed health-care reform of 1994 was driven in large part by his understanding that employers struggling with the competitive economy of the late 20th century were finding it increasingly difficult to provide adequate benefits to workers. The Earned Income Tax Credit, one of the most effective anti-poverty policies of the last third of the 20th century, was an effort to create incentives for low-income people to work. The 1996 welfare reform—crafted in large part by Republicans but reflecting principles Clinton had long supported—was an effort to direct more public assistance toward working people.

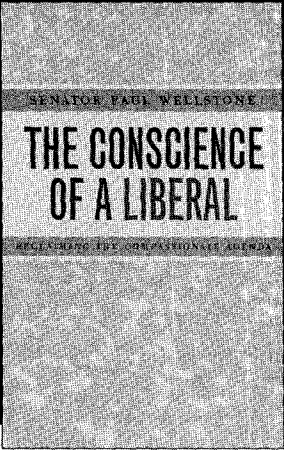
Clinton spent most of his presidency in battle with a hostile Republican Congress, and his policy options were heavily restricted as a result. But he became a master of incremental change, using executive powers and what leg-

islative leverage he had to inch public policy in the direction of the work- and education-based philosophy he had helped create. No one will confuse the Clinton years with the New Deal or the Great Society. But the policy achievements of the 1990s were considerable.

Clinton's description of his international policies is more fragmented and less compelling than his account of his domestic efforts. He came into office amid the ruins of old Cold War paradigms and took the foreign-policy helm without a compass. Not surprisingly, he often seemed rudderless, reacting to events as they occurred without framing a clear set of principles to guide him. But in fairness, no one else in those years was able to articulate a clear and compelling philosophy of international relations in a world no longer governed by competition among great powers. And as Clinton's successors try their hand at bringing coherence and "moral clarity" to America's role in the world, the pragmatic, nonideological policies of the 1990s look much better than they did at the time.

## SURVIVAL

"While I was hard at work on foreign affairs," Clinton writes in his account of his first term, "the new world of Whitewater was beginning to take shape at home." Some have found his description of the wave of scandals that almost destroyed him evasive and dishonest. But many readers will likely agree with Clinton that the degree of investigation and harassment that his administration faced was without precedent in American history, both in its intensity and in its longevity. Clinton offers several, sometimes conflicting explanations of his plight, and at times succumbs to a sullen bitterness that is out of place with the mainly positive, even sunny tone of most of the book. But at heart, his explanation rings true: Whitewater and subsequent investigations were, above all, the result of a political strategy crafted by the Republican Party and its allies on the right. They feared and resented Clinton because he was so skillfully repositioning the Democratic Party to occupy ground the Republicans believed was their own,



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and they calculated that he was far more vulnerable on personal than on political grounds. Clinton's own self-destructive behavior gave them an opportunity to move in for the kill, to be sure. But the assault was already far advanced and highly organized before anyone had ever heard of Monica Lewinsky.

It was certainly "vast" and certainly "right-wing" but hardly a "conspiracy." Rarely has a campaign of political destruction been waged so openly and unashamedly—and so effectively. That Clinton ultimately survived is testament to his own political skills and to the self-defeating excesses of his enemies. But no one could argue now that he truly won the battle. The White-water strategy helped limit Clinton's effectiveness. Perhaps most of all, it saddled Al Gore with unnecessary baggage without which he would almost certainly have won the 2000 election. Should we blame Clinton himself for giving the right the opportunity it was looking for? In part. But there can be no doubt that he paid a far higher price than any other president for tawdry personal behavior.

Clinton writes: "Although I would always regret what I had done wrong, I

will go to my grave being proud of what I had fought for in the impeachment battle, my last great showdown with the forces I had opposed all of my life—those who defended the old order of racial discrimination and segregation in the South and played on the insecurities and fears of the white working class in which I grew up; who had opposed the women's movement, the environmental movement, the gay-rights movement, and other efforts to expand our national community as assaults on the natural order; who believed that government should be run for the benefit of the powerful entrenched interests and favored tax cuts for the wealthy over health care and better education for children. ... I was glad that, by accident of history, I had had the good fortune to stand against this latest incarnation of the forces of reaction and division, and in favor of a more perfect union."

Self-serving and melodramatic to be sure. But like most of this sprawling, ungainly, captivating book, and like the man who wrote it, mostly right. ■

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new, Huntington's fears echo those expressed by Anglo-Protestants in the past about Irish Catholic, Italian, Jewish, Chinese, and many other immigrants. Most American historians would agree that Anglo-Protestant values have a great deal to do with the origins of American national identity. Taking cues from John Stuart Mill, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Gunnar Myrdal, they have seen Anglo-Protestantism transmogrified into a robust civic culture to which the vast majority of the children of immigrants acculturate even as they hold on to their non-Protestant ancestral religious traditions.

But Huntington does not think that will happen this time without a vigorous national Protestant revival. America's civic principles, he contends, will not be strong enough to prevent the emergence of a second culture and separate nationality among Latino immigrants. The history of nations instructs us on that point, according to Huntington. Race, language, religion—these, not mere political principles, are the stuff of nationhood.

Huntington's analysis differs sharply from the conclusions reached by the two federal commissions that during the past quarter-century have examined the Americanization of newcomers: the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy (1978–81), headed by Theodore Hesburgh, and the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform (1990–97), headed by Barbara Jordan. (I served as executive director of the first and vice chair of the second.) Americanization is realizable for newcomers, the Jordan commission concluded, "without regard to race, ethnicity, or religion." Unlike Huntington, the commissions drew a sharp distinction between lawfully admitted immigrants and illegal aliens. Problems with English-language acquisition, for example, are much greater for sojourner illegal aliens than they are for Mexican immigrants who settle in American cities and towns and send their children to schools. But for Huntington, Mexican immigrants are a problem whether or not they have come to the United States legally.

In fact, there is no evidence to believe that Mexican and Central American im-

## BOOKS

# Mr. Huntington's Nightmare

WHO ARE WE? THE CHALLENGES TO AMERICA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY  
BY SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON • SIMON & SCHUSTER • 408 PAGES • \$27.00

BY LAWRENCE H. FUCHS

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, THE HARVARD political scientist and author of *The Clash of Civilizations*, argues in his new book that America (he calls the United States "America" throughout) cannot continue to open itself to other peoples and retain its essential character unless Americans "recommit themselves to Anglo-Protestant culture and values ... that have been the source of their unity, power, prosperity, and morality as a force for good in the world." The scale and persistence of Latino immigration, in Huntington's view, now put American unity into special jeopardy because

the new immigrants arrive in a country that celebrates and even reinforces ethnic identities. Huntington particularly worries that Mexican immigrants, concentrated in the Southwest, will effectively reconquer the territory that the United States took from Mexico in the 19th century. He does not ask that these and other new immigrants become Protestants, only that they and their children acquire Anglo-Protestant individualistic values, speak English, and abandon their loyalties to their homelands in favor of the United States.

Although the focus on Latinos is



migrants and their descendants will maintain their political attachments to their ancestral homelands. Recent Mexican American history is reassuring on this point. There was a burst of interest in a Mexican-American "Quebecois" movement in the 1960s and '70s, but it has virtually disappeared as Mexican Americans have become more integrated into American politics. Thirty years ago, the Brown Berets and the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance for Land Grants) made noises about political and cultural separatism. That the separatist movement has dissolved in the face of the large Mexican immigration of the 1980s and '90s has nothing to do with the growth of evangelical Protestantism. It does have to do, though, with the strength of traditional, mainstream civil-rights and other advocacy groups based on participation in the American political system.

Organizations such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) have thrived using the rhetoric and methods of American civic traditions, based on individual rights. Antonia Hernandez, whose U.S. citizen father had been deported to Mexico in the 1930s during the expulsion of many Mexican Americans caught up in the sweep of illegal aliens, testified upon accepting the position of president and general counsel of MALDEF, "I had a lump in my throat when I took the oath of U.S. citizenship ... Because I wasn't born into the opportunities that this country has to offer, I don't take the rights and privileges for granted."

An analogy between Quebec and the hypothetical Mexican American separatist movement does not hold up. The French Canadians of Quebec have not simply been pro-French language, but anti-English. But while Mexican American leaders have sometimes raised the preservation of language as a rallying cry for ethnic mobilization, they have not done so in opposition to the acquisition of English. Mexico lost more than half of its national territory to the United States after the Texas insurrection and the Mexican War, but Mexican Americans have no historic memory comparable to the French Canadian memory of the loss that followed the

defeat of French armies by the British on the Plains of Abraham in 1763. In Quebec, the Catholic Church nursed that grievance and promoted French separatism. In contrast, the Church in the American Southwest called for the integration of Mexican immigrants and their descendants through instruction and preparation for citizenship, classes in English, and youth activities such as those promoted by the Catholic Youth Organization.

One of the most important reasons for the absence of a separatist movement in the United States is the difference between America's and Canada's founding myths. For Canada, the central myth is based on the idea of two nations forming a federal union—each with separate cultures, languages, and religions; each nation a founding or

But their children born in the United States learn English, participate in civic organizations, and volunteer in disproportionate numbers for the armed services. Like other immigrants, they dream of freedom and success in the United States.

Huntington refers to Lionel Sosa's *The Americano Dream*, a book of advice to Hispanic entrepreneurs. According to Sosa, the "Americano dream ... exists, it is realistic, and it is all there for all of us to share." But Huntington declares, "There is no Americano dream. There is only the American dream created by Anglo-Protestant society. Mexican-Americans will share in that dream and that society only if they dream in English."

Actually, most of the grandchildren of Latino immigrants could not dream

## There is no evidence to believe that Mexican Americans and their descendants will maintain political attachments to their ancestral homeland.

charter member, and the cultures separate but equal. The implicit contract at the heart of the confederation guaranteed to the Catholic Church within Quebec its control of a regionally concentrated, French-speaking Catholic population. The founding myth of the United States as a home for all who seek individual freedom and opportunity—regardless of ancestral nationality, race, or religious denomination—has so far been working for Latin Americans much as it has for other immigrant groups.

Contemporary Mexican and Central American immigrants, especially those who enter the United States illegally, present special problems in adapting to American society. Compared with south Asian and (recent) African immigrants, they have relatively low educational and skill levels that retard their mobility. And because many continue to be sojourners rather than settlers in the United States, they are relatively slow in acquiring English. The concentration of Mexican immigrants in the Southwest—somewhat exaggerated by Huntington—also slows their acculturation.

in Spanish even if they wanted to. But the more serious difficulty here is Huntington's persistent confusion of cultural differences with a failure to adopt American values. Most Mexican Americans find it highly desirable to live by such principles as due process of law, equal protection of the laws, freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of religion, the separation of church and state, and a system of government limited by checks and balances and separation of powers. Many are willing to fight and even die for such a system. Perhaps Huntington does not know the story of Sergeant Jimmy Lopez, one of the Americans held hostage by Iran in 1980, who wrote on the wall of the room where he was imprisoned, "*Viva la roja, blanco, y azul!*" ("Long live the red, white, and blue!"). Lopez was no less of an American for writing those sentiments in Spanish. ■

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# A Failure of Intelligence

BY ROBERT B. REICH

America's intelligence system failed to see terrorist threats coming from al-Qaeda prior to September 11 that should have been evident, and then, after 9-11, saw terrorist threats coming from Iraq that didn't exist. A system that doesn't warn of

real threats and does warn of unreal ones is broken.

A unanimous and bipartisan report, due out soon from the commission established by Congress to investigate intelligence mistakes leading up to 9-11, is likely to deal harshly with both the CIA and the FBI. Several commissioners have already opined that better intelligence gathering might have prevented the attack. Meanwhile, a unanimous and bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee has discredited the CIA's prewar assessments that Iraq possessed banned chemical and biological weapons and was seeking nuclear arms. Those assessments "either overstated or were not supported by the underlying intelligence," according to the committee. The senators blamed "a series of failures" of intelligence, failures that occurred because of "shoddy work," faulty management, outmoded procedures, "group think," and a "flawed culture."

What to do? The White House and Congress are sorting through several proposals. One would create a cabinet-level intelligence "czar" with more firm control over the nation's sprawling \$40 billion system for collecting and analyzing information about security threats. A second would do just the opposite, removing the CIA director from any control over other intelligence agencies in order to invite more checks and balances. A third would better insulate the director of central intelligence from politics by giving him or her a fixed term of, say, five to seven years. A fourth, and contrary, proposal would make him or her more politically accountable both to the president and to Congress.

Some of these may have merit, but they don't respond to the core lesson. It's that when U.S. foreign policy is based primarily on what our spy agencies say, we run huge risks of getting it disastrously wrong. The lesson isn't new. U.S. intelligence failed to foresee the split between China and the Soviet Union in 1960 and 1961, and thereafter never fully comprehended it. Had U.S. policy been based more on direct diplomacy than covert operations, we might have avoided the shameful and costly Vietnam War. The CIA was also notoriously wrong when it told John F. Kennedy that its plan

to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs "could not fail," and it misread Soviet intentions before the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. And we wildly exaggerated Soviet defense capabilities in the 1980s, leading the United States to spend hundreds of billions of dollars for no reason (the U.S.S.R. collapsed under its own weight, not Ronald Reagan's military buildup).

By all means, let's have better intelligence. But better intelligence is not a substitute for better policy. This is especially true when the threat comes in the form of terrorism. Terrorism, as I have emphasized, is a tactic. It is not itself our enemy. There is no finite number of terrorists in the world.

At any given time, their number depends on how many people are driven by anger and hate to join their ranks. Hence, "smoking out," imprisoning, or killing terrorists, based on information supplied by our intelligence agencies, cannot be the prime means of preventing future terrorist attacks on the United States. More important is dealing with the anger and hate. This means, among other things, restarting the Middle East peace process—rather than, as George W. Bush has done, running away

from it. It requires shoring up the economies of the Middle East. And it means strengthening the legitimacy of moderate Muslim leaders, instead of encouraging extremism—as the current administration's policies have undoubtedly done.

Equally fatuous is the notion that "preemptive wars" against nations our intelligence agencies have identified as likely adversaries will offer us much protection. Terrorists aren't dependent on a few rogue nations. They recruit and train in unstable parts of the world with weak or nonexistent governments, and they can move their bases and camps easily. The United States cannot control or police the world. Instead, we will have to depend on treaties and alliances to prevent illegal distribution of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. The current administration's "go-it-alone" diplomacy takes us in precisely the wrong direction.

That the United States suffers from a failure of intelligence is indisputable. But the calamitous state of our spy agencies is only one part of that failure. ■

**Yes, we need better intelligence. But better intelligence is not a substitute for better policy.**



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What's more, the world is full of expert minds like Dr. Budwig who have pursued

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prostate with a high P.S.A. He scheduled a time to surgically remove the prostate, but I canceled the appointment. Instead I went on the diet discussed in the book combined with another supplement. Over the months my P.S.A. has lowered until the last reading was one point two."

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## Where We Stand

THE AFT ON CRITICAL ISSUES

DOING WHAT WORKS

# AN ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING



*"American school children miss more than ten million school days each year because of asthma aggravated by poor air quality."*

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Sandra Feldman, President

**N**oxious fumes overwhelm students and teachers in an Alabama school. Mold spores breed in classrooms throughout New Orleans. And large numbers of teachers in Chicago and Washington endure poor air quality in their schools. These are just a few of the many disturbing examples of the environmental health problems plaguing our nation's schools.

Every weekday, eight million children and millions of teachers across America go to schools whose poor air quality can make them sick. These and other unsafe environmental conditions can cause a wide range of health problems—including asthma, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, and severe headaches.

A recent study by the General Accounting Office found that the air is unfit to breathe in nearly fifteen thousand schools across America. And it's not just the poorest or oldest schools that are struggling with this problem; environmental health threats exist in urban, rural, and suburban schools, and in old and new schools alike.

How can we expect students to do their best under these shameful circumstances? According to the American Lung Association, American school children miss more than ten million school days each year because of asthma aggravated by poor air quality. But even when they are able to attend classes, these students can suffer academically—up to 17 points lower on achievement tests, regardless of family background, according to a UCLA study. And these conditions also have a serious impact on the work and effectiveness of teachers.

A number of solutions are simple and inexpensive. Increased training, which the AFT provides to many school systems, offers assistance to principals, teachers, and other school employees in recognizing and addressing unhealthy conditions in schools. Some environmental concerns can be remedied through stepped-up maintenance and repairs to faulty circulation systems, or by doing something as sensible as banning the use of toxic cleaning agents.

Other solutions will require a more comprehensive effort, from both state legislatures and the U.S. Congress. A good first step would be to have a federal agency gather information and accurately document children's health symptoms and illnesses associated with school environmental quality, something that is not currently done.

Whatever it takes, it is unacceptable to subject students and staff to the health risks so many of them currently face. We can't expect to hold our children and teachers to high academic standards when their learning environments are substandard.

To learn more about education programs and resources that work, visit our Web site at [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org).